

# MAJOR AMERICAN WRITERS

THIRD EDITION

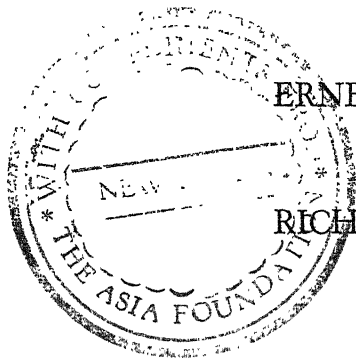
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VOLUME ONE

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# PREFACE

THE PURPOSE of the editors of this anthology in this, its third revision, is to supply for introductory college courses in American literature a body of selections from the chief writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and of representative writers of the seventeenth and twentieth centuries. The alteration from the original concentration of the book upon the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries seems to be made necessary by changes in the introductory course.

Nevertheless, it is still the conviction of the editors that the introductory course in American literature has suffered from trying to include too much, with the result that the student leaves the subject in a confused state of mind because he has tried to study too many authors in too short a time. In making this revision the authors hope that they have clung to the original purpose of the collection.

The editors trust that the selections are representative of various important phases of the authors chosen. The authors representing the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are, they hope, major American writers in the sense that they constitute the core of the national letters. The authors representing the seventeenth and twentieth centuries are, they trust, representative, even though the question of greatness and genius in their cases is under perpetual debate.

Great care has been taken to establish reputable texts. Without prejudice to the labors of others, it has seemed to the editors that in no field is the need of establishing reputable texts more necessary than in the field of American literature. The editors have, however, been catholic in their choices, sometimes printing first editions, sometimes the latest versions to appear in an author's lifetime, sometimes a posthumous version appearing close to the date of the author's demise. They have also preserved the punctuation and spelling of the originals. To many, this will seem pedantry; but the flavor and cadence of literature are often changed for the worse when an editor "improves" or modernizes the punctuation or spelling of the original. Fortunately for the beginning student, American literature is still too young not to be readily grasped in its verbal meanings, even when the spelling is not twentieth-century spelling and the punctuation is that older, rhetorical punctuation we have abandoned under the impact of the newspaper and the linotype machine.

The texts have been heavily annotated where they need it. Years of experience in teaching have shown the editors that little general information can be expected of all members of any class, and the editors have therefore preferred to err on the side of generosity. If a footnote seems obvious, let the reader pleasantly remember that it may not be obvious to those less well informed than he is.

There is, of course, a school which holds that it is the business of the student to look up references. Doubtless there is something to be said for this Spartan

practice, but there is not very much to be said for it. In the first place, references are not always easy to look up—as the editors have discovered to their sorrow; in the second place, students do not always look them up; and in the third place, no adult expects to run constantly to a dictionary or an encyclopaedia when he is trying to get pleasure from a masterpiece. Why should the student, to whom the teacher is trying to make reading attractive, be subjected to “busy work” that the adult does not perform? The editors believe that literature will be attractive in proportion as its meaning is made clear. To that end they have given the meanings of all obscure words and phrases where they have understood them, as well as the meanings of all words, the sense of which has been altered with the passage of time. They have also explained all the allusions they could, and they have tried to fix the sources of the quotations with which good writers abound. If an allusion or a reference goes unexplained, it is because the editors could not, after reasonable search, pin it down with accuracy.

In planning the contents of this collection the editors have chosen selections which should leave the student free to read such novels as *The Scarlet Letter*, *Typee*, *Moby Dick*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, or *The Portrait of a Lady*, which cannot be adequately represented in an anthology.

It is a pleasure to record the generous spirit of co-operation shown by the trustees and officials of the Henry E. Huntington Library in permitting the editors to print for the first time an accurate transcript of that portion of Franklin's *Autobiography* included in this book; and to acknowledge also their help in the matter of Poe. Equally cordial thanks should be given the officials of the University of Michigan Library, particularly Miss Ella M. Hymans and her assistant, Miss Pauline G. Waite, who, in the Reserved Book Room of that institution, have charge of a remarkable collection of American first editions. The unfailing patience and courtesy of Miss Hilda M. Rankin, Miss Mary E. Mixer, and their colleagues in the Reference Library have helped to make scholarly research a pleasure. The co-operation of the library officials of Southern Methodist University is also gratefully acknowledged.

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# JOHN SMITH

1579/80 - 1631

## I. EUROPEAN SOLDIER OF FORTUNE (1579/80-1606)

- 1579/80 Born in Willoughby, Lincolnshire, the son of George and Alice Smith, baptized January 9, 1579, old style.
- 1596 Upon the death of his father, he entered into his property, and was apprenticed to Thomas Sendall, merchant of Lynn, but ran away.
- 1596-1599 An adventurer and soldier, partly in the French armies and partly in the Dutch armies.
- 1600 Shipwrecked off the coast of Northumberland; returned to Willoughby and lived in a "Pavillion of boughes" in a field, studying the art of war.
- 1600-1601 Military service and adventures in France, the Mediterranean, Italy, and Austria, according to his account.
- 1601-1602 Service in Hungary and Transylvania against the Turks; his supposed single-handed combats against three Turks at the siege of Canizza brought him a coat of arms granted by Sigismund Bathori, Duke of Transylvania, and registered by the English Garter King-at-Arms.
- 1602-1603 Taken captive by the Turks at the Battle of Rothenthurm Pass (Nov. 18, 1602), he passed into slavery in Turkey, but escaped into Russia, getting as far as the Crimea, and then returned to Hungary, if his account is accurate.
- 1604 To Europe, probably being captured by Mediterranean pirates on the way. Return to England, probably to London.

## II. AMERICAN EXPLORER AND LEADER (1606-1614)

- 1606 December, sailed with others in an expedition (three ships) from England to found a colony in Virginia, under sealed orders.
- 1607 May 24, disembarked at Jamestown, one of 104 colonists. Officially a member of the governing Council, he was not permitted to serve until June 20. Made valuable explorations of the nearby rivers and lands, and according to his own account escaped death at the hands of Powhatan through the intervention of Pocahontas.
- 1608 January, tried for the loss by death of two men and sentenced to be hanged. The sentence was set aside and Smith restored to his office upon the arrival of Captain Christopher Newport from England, with reinforcements.
- 1608-1609 President of the Council. During the winter he preserved the colony from starvation. *A True Relation* published in London, 1608.
- 1609 October, he was injured by an explosion of gunpowder while exploring Chesapeake Bay. Returned to England.
- 1612 *A Map of Virginia* published at Oxford.

- 1614 Sent to explore the New England coast. Captured by pirates, but returned safely to London.

### III. THE THEORIST OF COLONIZATION (1614-1631)

- 1615 Smith seems to have settled permanently in London, a friend of Purchas, Dr. John Dee, Dr. William Simmonds, and other members of the "imperialist" or Greater England group.
- 1616 Published *A Description of New England*.
- 1620 Published *New Englands Trials* (second edition, much altered, 1622).
- 1624 Published *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, & the Summer Isles*.
- 1626 Published *An Accidence or The Path-way to Experience* (also known as *The Seaman's Grammar*), sometimes called the first elementary textbook on navigation.
- 1630 Published *True Travels, Adventvres, & Observations of Captaine Iohn Smith*.
- 1631 Published *Advertisements For the unexperienced Planters of New-England, or anywhere*.
- 1631 June 21, died in London.

BIOGRAPHIES: Besides Smith's disputable account of his own career, see Charles Dudley Warner, *Captain John Smith*, Holt, 1881; E. Keble Chatterton, *Captain John Smith*, Harper, 1927; John Gould Fletcher, *John Smith—Also Pocahontas*, Brentano, 1928. The dispute over the authenticity of Smith's accounts of his own achievements can be traced by referring to the bibliography at the end of the sketch of his life in the *Dictionary of American Biography*, by James Truslow Adams. For the general literary background and for a discussion of Smith see Howard Mumford Jones, *The Literature of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century*, *Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, Boston, 1946.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND EDITIONS: The best edition is: *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith, President of Virginia, and Admiral of New England 1580-1631*, 2 vols. ("parts"), ed. by Edward Arber, re-edited with an introduction by A. G. Bradley, Edinburgh, 1910. See also *The True Travels, Adventvres, & Observations of Captaine John Smith*, J. G. Fletcher and L. C. Wroth, edd., Rimington and Hooper, 1930. There are bibliographies in Arber-Bradley and in Fletcher-Wroth; and see also Wilberforce Eames, *A Bibliography of Captain John Smith*, 1927, reprinted from Sabin's *Dictionary of Books Relating to America*.

Captain John Smith is the first American writer and the last Elizabethan in our literature. He wrote as he fought, impatiently, practically, a cross between Cyrano de Bergerac and Harry Hotspur; and so indelible is the impress he has left upon the American imagination, it is astonishing to discover that out of a life half a century long, including twenty years of adventure, he spent only four years in the New World. But these four created a mythology. Captain John Smith and Pocahontas are as legendary as Leatherstocking or Little Eva.

His writing is Jacobean English, hurried, graphic, ungrammatical, intent upon getting the thing said, the act done. He was a shrewd observer; and if he thought the Virginia Indians were parts of the feudal order, he had nevertheless the devouring eye which noted their customs and their psychology. He became one of the leading lights in the expansion of empire, both with sword and with pen. Indeed,

the books he wrote or collected from others (his subordinates), form a small library on colonization. His *True Travels* describes the making of an explorer. The *Seaman's Grammar* and the *Advertisements* offer practical instruction in the skills and knowledges necessary for planting a colony. And his other books, especially the *Generall Historie of Virginia*, trace in minute, practical detail the ups and downs of infant colonies, notably at Jamestown. Small wonder that Smith conventionally stands at the fountainhead of the great stream of American letters.

From THE GENERALL HISTORIE OF VIRGINIA,  
NEW ENGLAND, & THE SUMMER ISLES

Smith's *Generall Historie* is in six books, much of the material being compounded from other authors. Book I hastily traces the history of English voyages from that of Madoc in the twelfth century to Smith's own voyage. Book II is principally a description of the land and its inhabitants. Books III and IV tell the history of Jamestown from 1607 to 1624. Book V is a history of Bermuda, and Book VI of the explorations of the New England coast. Smith helped himself freely to the work of other explorers and to other books and pamphlets about Jamestown. The first three chapters of Book III are here reprinted from the Arber-Bradley text as forming a natural unit, sketching the history of the colony from 1606 to the departure of Captain Newport in the spring of 1608. Certain marginal rubrics are omitted.

CHAPTER I

[THEIR ORDERS OF GOVERNMENT, ACCIDENTS IN GOING,  
FIRST LANDING AND GOVERNEMENT SETTLED.]

IT MIGHT well be thought, a Countrie so faire (as *Virginia* is) and a people so tractable, would long ere this haue beene quietly possessed, to the satisfaction of the adventurers, and the eternizing of the memory of those that effected it. But because all the world doe see a defeilement; this following Treatise shall giue satisfaction to all indifferent Readers, how the businesse hath bin carried: where no doubt they will easily vnderstand and answer to their question, how it came to passe there was no better speed and successe in those proceedings. 5

Captaine *Bartholomew Gosnoll*, one of the first movers of this plantation, having many yeares solicited many of his friends, but found small assistants; at last prevailed with some Gentlemen, as Captaine *John Smith*, Master *Edward-maria Wingfield*, Master *Robert Hunt*, and divers others, who depended a yeare vpon his proiects, but nothing could be effected, till by their great charge and industrie, it came to be apprehended by certaine of the Nobilitie, Gentry, and Marchants, so that his Maiestie by his letters patents, gaue com- 10 15

3. **adventurers**—investors, i.e., those who ventured money. 4. **defeilement**—i.e., in 1612 (Arber-Bradley). 5. **indifferent**—unprejudiced. 9. **Gosnoll**—Bartholomew Gosnold, fl. 1572-1607, navigator and colonizer. 12. **Wingfield**—Edward Maria Wingfield, fl. 1586-1613, removed from office, 1607; author of "A Discourse of Virginia." 12. **Hunt**—Robert Hunt, fl. 1568-1608, Episcopal clergyman. 14. **charge**—expense. 15. **letters patents**—Charter, granted April 10, 1606.

mission for establishing Councils, to direct here; and to governe, and to execute there. To effect this, was spent another yeare, and by that, three ships were provided, one of 100 Tuns, another of 40. and a Pinnace of 20. The transportation of the company was committed to Captaine *Christopher Newport*, a Marriner well practised for the Westerne parts of *America*. But their orders for government were put in a box, not to be opened, nor the governours knowne vntill they arrived in *Virginia*.

On the 19 of December, 1606, we set sayle from Blackwall, but by vnprosperous winds, were kept six weekes in the sight of *England*; all which time, Master *Hunt* our Preacher, was so weake and sicke, that few expected his recovery. Yet although he were but twentie myles from his habitation (the time we were in the Downes) and notwithstanding the stormy weather, nor the scandalous imputations (of some few, little better then Atheists, of the greatest ranke among vs) suggested against him, all this could never force from him so much as a seeming desire to leaue the busines, but preferred the service of God, in so good a voyage, before any affection to contest with his godlesse foes, whose disastorous designes (could they haue prevailed) had even then overthrowne the businesse, so many discontents did then arise, had he not with the water of patience, and his godly exhortations (but chiefly by his true devoted examples) quenched those flames of envie, and dissention.

We watered at the Canaries, we traded with the Salvages at *Dominica*; three weekes we spent in refreshing our selues amongst those west-India Isles; in *Gwardalupa* we found a bath so hot, as in it we boyled Porck as well as over the fire. And at a little Isle calle *Monica*, we tooke from the bushes with our hands, neare two hogsheads full of Birds in three or foure houres. In *Mevis*, *Mona*, and the Virgin Isles, we spent some time; where, with a lothsome beast like a Crocodil, called a Gwayn, Tortoises, Pellicans, Parrots, and fishes, we daily feasted.

Gone from thence in search of *Virginia*, the company was not a little discomforted, seeing the Marriners had 3 dayes passed their reckoning and found no land; so that Captaine *Ratliffe* (Captain of the Pinnace) rather desired to beare vp the helme to returne for *England*, then make further search. But God the guider of all good actions, forcing them by an extreame storme to hull all night, did driue them by his providence to their desired Port, beyond all their expectations; for never any of them had seene that coast.

The first land they made they called *Cape Henry*; where thirtie of them

1. **Councils**—The Council of the London Company, which directed "here," i.e., in England, as contrasted to the Council set up by the sealed box of line 6, intended to govern "there," i.e., in Virginia. 2. **three ships**—the *Sarah Constant*, the *Goodspeed*, and the *Discovery*. 3. **Pinnace**—a small, two-masted vessel, schooner-rigged. 4-5. **Newport**—Christopher Newport, ?-1617, mariner, who served under Drake. He was "well practised for the Western parts" in the sense that he had been on expeditions to the West Indies. 6-7. **governours**—board of governors, or Council. 8. **Blackwall**—on the lower Thames. 12. **Downes**—a roadstead off the Goodwin Sands on the coast of Kent. 20. **examples**—instances. 21. **Canaries**—Canary Islands, off the coast of Africa. 21. **Dominica**—one of the Lesser Antilles in the West Indies. 23. **Gwardalupa**—Guadeloupe, in the Lesser Antilles. 24-26. **Monica . . . Virgin Isles**—small islands in the West Indies. 27. **Gwayn**—iguana. 29. **Virginia**—the mainland of North America. 31. **Ratliffe**—John Ratcliffe, killed by Powhatan in 1610. 34. **hull**—to float or be driven on the hull alone, without the aid of sail. 36. **Henry**—named for Henry Frederick, Prince of Wales (d. 1612).

recreating themselves on shore, were assaulted by five Salvages, who hurt two of the English very dangerously.

That night was the box opened, and the orders read, in which *Bartholomew Gosnoll*, *Iohn Smith*, *Edward Wingfield*, *Christopher Newport*, *Iohn Ratcliffe*, *Iohn Martin*, and *George Kendall*, were named to be the Councell, and to choose a President amongst them for a yeare, who with the Councell should governe. Matters of moment were to be examined by a Iury, but determined by the maior part of the Councell, in which the President had two voyces.

Vntill the 13 of May they sought a place to plant in; then the Councell was sworne, Master *Wingfield* was chosen President, and an Oration made, why Captaine *Smith* was not admitted of the Councell as the rest.

Now falleth every man to worke, the Councell contriue the Fort, the rest cut downe trees to make place to pitch their Tents; some provide clappbord to relade the ships, some make gardens, some nets, &c. The Salvages often visited vs kindly. The Presidents overweening ieaousie would admit no exercise at armes, or fortification but the boughs of trees cast together in the forme of a halfe moone by the extraordinary paines and diligence of Captaine *Kendall*.

*Newport*, *Smith*, and twentie others, were sent to discover the head of the river: by divers small habitations they passed, in six dayes they arrived at a Towne called *Powhatan*, consisting of some twelue houses, pleasantly seated on a hill; before it three fertile Iles, about it many of their cornefields, the place is very pleasant, and strong by nature, of this place the Prince is called *Powhatan*, and his people *Powhatans*. To this place the river is navigable: but higher within a myle, by reason of the Rockes and Isles, there is not passage for a small Boat, this they call the Falles. The people in all parts kindly intreated them, till being returned within twentie myles of *Iames* towne, they gaue iust cause of ieaousie: but had God not blessed the discoverers otherwise then those at the Fort, there had then beene an end of that plantation; for at the Fort, where they arrived the next day, they found 17 men hurt, and a boy slaine by the Salvages, and had it not chanced a crosse barre shot from the Ships strooke downe a bough from a tree amongst them, that caused them to retire, our men had all beene slaine, being securely all at worke, and their armes in dry fats.

Herevpon the President was contented the Fort should be pallisadoed, the Ordnance mounted, his men armed and exercised; for many were the assaults, and ambuscadoes of the Salvages, and our men by their disorderly stragling were often hurt, when the Salvages by the nimblenesse of their heeles well escaped.

What toyle we had, with so small a power to guard our workemen adayes, watch all night, resist our enemies, and effect our businesse, to relade the

6. President—here, about equivalent to chairman. 8. maior—larger. 9. voyces—votes. 16. ieaousie—overcarefulness. 19. discover—explore. 21. houses—The Virginia Indians lived in houses resembling sheds. 23. Prince—The seventeenth-century Englishman thought of the Indians as living in a feudal system. 24-26. place . . . Falles—at modern Richmond. 32. crosse barre—a projectile either in the shape of a ball and bar or so made as to expand into the form of a cross on being shot from a gun. 33. securely—i.e., with an unjustifiable sense of security. 34. dry fats—dry vats, that is; their weapons were stored. 36. Ordnance—cannon. 36. exercised—drilled. 41. relade—reload.



ships, cut downe trees, and prepare the ground to plant our Corne, &c, I referre to the Readers consideration.

Six weekes being spent in this manner, Captaine *Newport* (who was hired onely for our transportation) was to returne with the ships.

5 Now Captaine *Smith*, who all this time from their departure from the Canaries was restrained as a prisoner vpon the scandalous suggestions of some of the chiefe (envying his repute) who fained he intended to vsurpe the government, murder the Councill, and make himselfe King, that his confederats were dispersed in all the three ships, and that divers of his confederats  
10 that revealed it, would affirme it; for this he was committed as a prisoner.

Thirteene weekes he remained thus suspected, and by that time the ships should returne they pretended out of their commisserations, to referre him to the Councill in *England* to receiue a check, rather then by particulating his designes make him so odious to the world, as to touch his life, or vtterly  
15 overthrow his reputation. But he so much scorned their charitie, and publicly defied the vttermost of their crueltie; he wisely prevented their policies, though he could not suppress their envies; yet so well he demeaned himselfe in this businesse, as all the company did see his innocency, and his adversaries malice, and those suborned to accuse him, accused his accusers of subornation; many  
20 vntruthes were alledged against him; but being so apparently disproved, begat a generall hatred in the hearts of the company against such vniust Commanders, that the President was adiudged to giue him 200l.; so that all he had was seized vpon, in part of satisfaction, which *Smith* presently returned to the Store for the generall vse of the *Colony*.

25 Many were the mischiefes that daily sprung from their ignorant (yet ambitious) spirits; but the good Doctrine and exhortation of our Preacher Master *Hunt* reconciled them, and caused Captaine *Smith* to be admitted of the Council.

The next day all receiued the Communion, the day following the Salvages  
30 voluntarily desired peace, and Captaine *Newport* returned for *England* with newes; leaving in *Virginia* 100. the 15 of Iune 1607. By this obserue;

*Good men did ne'r their Countries ruine bring.  
But when evill men shall iniuries beginne;  
Not caring to corrupt and violate*  
35 *The iudgements-seats for their owne Lucr' sake:  
Then looke that Country cannot long haue peace,  
Though for the present it haue rest and ease.*

10. *affirme*—confirm. 11. *Thirteene weekes*—March 24-June 10, 1607 (Arber-Bradley). 13. *particulating*—itemizing. 16. *prevented*—anticipated. 22. *adiudged*—legally compelled. 22. *he*—Wingfield. 27. *admitted*—June 10 or 20 (Arber-Bradley). 29. *following*—June 22 (Arber-Bradley). 31. *newes*—reports. 31. 15—or rather 22 (Arber-Bradley). 35. *Lucr'*—lucre. 37. *ease*—There follow "the names of them that were the first Planters," here omitted.

CHAPTER II

WHAT HAPPENED TILL THE FIRST SUPPLY

Being thus left to our fortunes, it fortun'd that within ten dayes scarce ten amongst vs could either goe, or well stand, such extreame weaknes and sicknes oppressed vs. And thereat none need marvaile, if they could con- 5 sider the cause and reason, which was this.

Whilst the ships stayed, our allowance was somewhat bettered, by a daily proportion of Bisket, which the sailers would pilfer to sell, giue, or exchange with vs, for money, Saxefras, furies, or loue. But when they departed, there remained neither taverne, beere house, nor place of reliefe but the common 10 Kettell. Had we beene as free from all sinnes as gluttony, and drunkennesse, we might haue beene canonized for Saints; But our President would never haue been admitted, for ingrossing to his private, Oatmeale, Sacke, Oyle, *Aquavitæ*, Beefe, Egges, or what not, but the Kettell; that indeed he allowed equally to be distributed, and that was halfe a pint of wheat, and as much 15 barley boyled with water for a man a day, and this having fryed some 26. weekes in the ships hold, contained as many wormes as graines; so that we might truely call it rather so much bran than corne, our drinke was water, our lodgings Castles in the ayre.

With this lodging and dyet, our extreame toile in bearing and planting 20 Pallisadoes, so strained and bruised vs, and our continuall labour in the extremitie of the heat had so weakned vs, as were cause sufficient to haue made vs as miserable in our natiue Countrey, or any other place in the world.

From May, to September, those that escaped, liued vpon Sturgeon, and Sea-crabs, fittie in this time we buried, the rest seeing the Presidents proiects 25 to escape these miseries in our Pinnace by flight (who all this time had neither felt want nor sicknes) so moved our dead spirits, as we deposed him; and established *Ratcliffe* in his place, (*Gosnoll* being dead) *Kendall* deposed. *Smith* newly recovered, *Martin* and *Ratcliffe* was by his care preserved and relieued, and the most of the souldiers recovered with the skilfull diligence 30 of Master *Thomas Wotton* our Chirurgian generall.

But now was all our provision spent, the Sturgeon gone, all helps abandoned, each houre expecting the fury of the Salvages; when God the patron of all good indeuours, in that desperate extremitie so changed the hearts of the Salvages, that they brought such plenty of their fruits, and provision, as 35 no man wanted.

2. supply—reinforcements and provisions. 4. goe—be active. 7. allowance—During its early years Jamestown was managed on communal principles. 8. Bisket—ship's biscuit, a kind of hardtack. 9. Saxefras—sassafras, long supposed to have general curative properties. 12. President—Wingfield. 13. ingrossing to his private—monopolizing for his private use. 13. Sacke—sack, a kind of white wine. 14. *Aquavitæ*—ardent spirits, usually brandy. 14-15. Kettell . . . distributed—i.e., the charge is that Wingfield permitted only the commonest foods to go to the common kitchen. 16. fryed—cooked. 16-17. 26. weekes—December, 1606-June, 1607 (Arber-Bradley). 18. water—Unaware of the germ theory, the Jacobbeans naturally found water a dangerous drink. 24. September—1607 (Arber-Bradley). 27. deposed—September 10, 1607 (Arber-Bradley). 28. dead—August 22, 1607 (Arber-Bradley). 28. deposed—September ?, 1607 (Arber-Bradley). 31. Chirurgian—surgeon, physician. 36. wanted—lacked anything.

And now where some affirmed it was ill done of the Councell to send forth men so badly provided, this incontestable reason will shew them plainly they are too ill advised to nourish such ill conceits; first, the fault of our going was our owne, what could be thought fitting or necessary we had; but what  
 5 we should find, or want, or where we should be, we were all ignorant, and supposing to make our passage in two moneths, with victuall to liue, and the advantage of the spring to worke; we were at Sea fūe moneths, where we both spent our victuall and lost the opportunitie of the time and season to plant, by the vnskilfull presumption of our ignorant transporters, that vnder-  
 10 stood not at all, what they vndertooke.

Such actions haue ever since the worlds beginning bene subiect to such accidents, and every thing of worth is found full of difficulties: but nothing so difficult as to establish a Common wealth so farre remote from men and meanes, and where mens mindes are so vntoward as neither doe well them-  
 15 selues, nor suffer others. But to proceed.

The new President, and *Martin*, being little beloved, of weake iudgement in dangers, and lesse industrie in peace, committed the managing of all things abroad to Captaine *Smith*: who by his owne example, good words, and faire promises, set some to mow, others to binde thatch, some to build houses,  
 20 others to thatch them, himselfe alwayes bearing the greatest taske for his owne share, so that in short time, he provided most of them lodgings, neglecting any for himselfe.

This done, seeing the Salvages superfluitie beginne to decrease (with some of his workemen) shipped himselfe in the Shallop to search the Country for  
 25 trade. The want of the language, knowledge to mannage his boat without sailes, the want of a sufficient power (knowing the multitude of the Salvages), apparell for his men, and other necessities, were infinite impediments; yet no discouragement.

Being but six or seauen in company he went downe the river to *Kecough-  
 30 tan*: where at first they scorned him, as a famished man; and would in derision offer him a handfull of Corne, a peece of bread, for their swords and muskets, and such like proportions also for their apparell. But seeing by trade and courtesie there was nothing to be had, he made bold to try such conclusions as necessitie inforced, though contrary to his Commission: Let fly his  
 35 muskets, ran his boat on shore; whereat they all fled into the woods.

So marching towards their houses, they might see great heapes of corne: much adoe he had to restraints his hungry soldiers from present taking of it, expecting as it hapned that the Salvages would assault them, as not long  
 40 after they did with a most hydeous noyse. Sixtie or seauentie of them, some blacke, some red, some white, some party-coloured, came in a square order, singing and dauncing out of the woods, with their *Okee* (which was an Idoll

3. fault of our going—The errors in the expedition were our own fault. 8. spent—used. 16. President—Ratcliffe. 17-18. things abroad—matters outside. 21. owne share—The egotism of this passage is somewhat diminished when the reader learns at the end of the chapter that it was written by Smith in collaboration with Thomas Studley, Robert Fenton, and Edward Harrington. 24. Shallop—a large, heavy boat furnished with one or more masts and appropriate sails. 29. downe the river—Jamestown was purposely located some miles above the mouth of the river to protect it from the Spaniards. Kecoughtan was near Hampton. 31. Corne—grain. 34. fly—fire. 40. party-coloured—variously colored.

made of skinnes, stuffed with mosse, all painted and hung with chaines and copper) borne before them: and in this manner, being well armed with Clubs, Targets, Bowes and Arrowes, they charged the English, that so kindly receiued them with their muskets loaden with Pistoll shot, that downe fell their God, and diuers lay sprauling on the ground; the rest fled againe to the woods, and ere long sent one of their *Quiyoughkasoucks* to offer peace, and redeeme their *Okee*. 5

*Smith* told them, if onely six of them would come vnarmed and loade his boat, he would not only be their friend, but restore them their *Okee*, and giue them Beads, Copper, and Hatchets besides: which on both sides was to their contents performed: and then they brought him Venison, Turkies, wild foule, bread, and what they had; singing and dauncing in signe of friendship till they departed. 10

In his returne he discovered the Towne and Country of *Warraskoyack*.

*Thus God vnbondless by his power,  
Made them thus kind, would vs deuour.* 15

*Smith* perceiving (notwithstanding their late miserie) not any regarded but from hand to mouth: (the company being well recovered) caused the Pinnacle to be provided with things fitting to get provision for the yeare following; but in the interim he made 3. or 4. iournies and discovered the people of *Chickahamania*: yet what he carefully provided the rest carelesly spent. 20

*Wingfield* and *Kendall* liuing in disgrace, seeing all things at randome in the absence of *Smith*, the companies dislike of their Presidents weaknes, and their small loue to *Martins* never mending sicknes, strengthened themselues with the sailers and other confederates, to regaine their former credit and authority, or at least such meanes aboard the Pinnacle, (being fitted to saile as *Smith* had appointed for trade) to alter her course and to goe for *England*. 25

*Smith* vnexpectedly returning had the plot discovered to him, much trouble he had to prevent it, till with store of sakre and musket shot he forced them stay or sinke in the riuer: which action cost the life of capitaine *Kendall*. 30

These brawles are so disgustfull, as some will say they were better forgotten, yet all men of good iudgement will conclude, it were better their basenes should be manifest to the world, then the business beare the scorne and shame of their excused disorders.

The President and capitaine *Archer* not long after intended also to haue abandoned the country, which proiect also was curbed, and suppressed by *Smith*. 35

The *Spaniard* never more greedily desired gold than he victuall; nor his souldiers more to abandon the Country, then he to keepe it. But finding plentie of Corne in the riuer of *Chickahamania*, where hundreds of Salvages in diuers places stood with baskets expecting his comming. 40

3. Targets—shields (made of wicker). 4. Pistoll shot—for “in fighting.” 6. *Quiyoughkasoucks*—medicine men. 14. *Warraskoyack*—a tribe occupying the present Isle of Wight County. 17. *their*—the settlers’. 17-18. *regarded* . . . *mouth*—not anything being regarded but living from hand to mouth. 21. *Chickahamania*—modern Chickahominy. 29. *sakre*—saker, an old form of cannon known as a demi-culverin. 30. *Kendall*—who was condemned to death after a trial. 35. *President*—Ratcliffe. 39. *finding*—he found.

And now the winter approaching, the rivers became so covered with swans, geese, duckes, and cranes, that we daily feasted with good bread, Virginia pease, pumpions, and putchamins, fish, fowle, and diverse sorts of wild beasts as fat as we could eate them: so that none of our Tuftaffaty humorists desired to goe for *England*.

5 But our *Comædies* never endured long without a *Tragedie*; some idle exceptions being muttered against Captaine *Smith*, for not discovering the head of the *Chickahamania* river, and taxed by the Councell, to be too slow in so worthy an attempt. The next voyage hee proceeded so farre that with much  
10 labour by cutting of trees insunder he made his passage; but when his Barge could passe no farther, he left her in a broad bay out of danger of shot, commanding none should goe a shore till his returne: himselfe with two English and two Salvages went vp higher in a Canowe; but hee was not long absent, but his men went a shore, whose want of government gaue both occasion and  
15 opportunity to the Salvages to surprise one *George Cassen*, whom they slew, and much failed not to haue cut of the boat and all the rest.

*Smith* little dreaming of that accident, being got to the marshes at the rivers head, twentie myles in the desert, had his two men slaine (as is supposed) sleeping by the Canowe, whilst himselfe by fowling sought them victuall: who finding he was beset with 200. Salvages, two of them hee slew,  
20 still defending himselfe with the ayd of a Salvage his guid, whom he bound to his arme with his garters, and vsed him as a buckler, yet he was shot in his thigh a little, and had many arrowes that stucke in his cloathes but no great hurt, till at last they tooke him prisoner.

25 When this newes came to *Iames* towne, much was their sorrow for his losse, fewe expecting what ensued.

Sixe or seuen weekes those Barbarians kept him prisoner, many strange triumphes and coniurations they made of him, yet hee so demeaned himselfe amongst them, as he not onely diverted them from surprising the Fort, but  
30 procured his owne libertie, and got himselfe and his company such estimation amongst them, that those Salvages admired him more then their owne *Quiyouckosucks*.

The manner how they vsed and deliuered him, is as followeth.

The Salvages hauing drawne from *George Cassen* whether Captaine *Smith*  
35 was gone, prosecuting that oportunity they followed him with. 300. bowmen, conducted by the King of *Pamavneke*, who in diuisions searching the turnings of the riuer, found *Robinson* and *Emry* by the fire side: those they shot full of arrowes and slew. Then finding the Captaine, as is said, that vsed the Salvage that was his guide as his shield (three of them being slaine and diuers  
40 other so gauld) all the rest would not come neere him. Thinking thus to haue

3. pumpions—pumpkins. 3. putchamins—persimmons. 4. Tuftaffaty—taffeta, used derisively. 4. humorists—persons governed by a single humor. 14. government—good management. 16. much failed not—did not fail by much. 18. desert—wilderness. 22. garters—The Jacobean garter was a long and elaborate affair, like that worn by Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*. 28. triumphes—triumphal ceremonies. 34. whether—whither. 36. King of *Pamavneke*—the Pamunky River, formed by the union of the North Anna and the South Anna Rivers. 37. *Robinson and Emry*—A gloss on the original text identifies these as John Robinson and Thomas Emry. 40. gauld—galled, harassed in warfare.

returned to his boat, regarding them, as he marched, more then his way, slipped vp to the middle in an oasie creeke and his Salvage with him; yet durst they not come to him till being neere dead with cold, he threw away his armes. Then according to their composition they drew him forth and led him to the fire, where his men were slaine. Diligently they chafed his benumbed limbs. 5

He demanding for their Captaine, they shewed him *Opechankanough*, King of *Pamauke*, to whom he gaue a round Ivory double compass Dyall. Much they marvailed at the playing of the Fly and Needle, which they could see so plainely, and yet not touch it, because of the glasse that covered them. 10 But when he demonstrated by that Globe-like Iewell, the roundnesse of the earth, and skies, the spheare of the Sunne, Moone, and Starres, and how the Sunne did chase the night round about the world continually; the greatnesse of the Land and Sea, the diversitie of Nations, varietie of complexions, and how we were to them *Antipodes*, and many other such like matters, they all stood as amazed with admiration. 15

Notwithstanding, within an houre after[,] they tyed him to a tree, and as many as could stand about him prepared to shoot him: but the King holding vp the Compass in his hand, they all laid downe their Bowes and Arrowes, and in a triumphant manner led him to *Orapaks*, where he was after their manner kindly feasted, and well vsed. 20

Their order in conducting him was thus; Drawing themselues all in fyle, the King in the middest had all their Peeces and Swords borne before him. Captaine *Smith* was led after him by three great Salvages, holding him fast by each arme: and on each side six went in fyle with their Arrowes nocked. 25 But arriving at the Towne (which was but onely thirtie or fortie hunting houses made of Mats, which they remoue as they please, as we our tents) all the women and children staring to behold him, the souldiers first all in fyle performed the forme of a *Bissone* so well as could be; and on each flanke, officers as Serieants to see them keepe their orders. A good time they continued this exercise, and then cast themselues in a ring, dauncing in such severall Postures, and singing and yelling out such hellish notes and screeches; being strangely painted, every one his quiver of Arrowes, and at his backe a club; on his arme a Fox or an Otters skinne, or some such matter for his vambrace; their heads and shoulders painted red, with Oyle and *Pocones* 35 mingled together, which Scarlet-like colour made an exceeding handsome shew; his Bow in his hand, and the skinne of a Bird with her wings abroad dried, tyed on his head, a peece of copper, a white shell, a long feather, with a small rattle growing at the tayles of their snaks tyed to it, or some such like toy. All this while *Smith* and the King stood in the middest guarded, as before is said: and after three dances they all departed. *Smith* they conducted 40

2. oasie—oozy. 4. composition—mental constitution, i.e., according to their "ways." 5. were—had been. 9. Fly and Needle—fly: compass card, over which the compass needle moves. 14. complexions—here, either temperaments or colors of the skin. 20. Orapaks—now in Hanover County. 23. their—i.e., of Smith and his slain comrades. 25. nocked—the notch of the arrow fitted to the bow-string, ready for use. 29. Bissone—*bisoño*, an undisciplined squad. 30. Serieants—sergeants, in the general sense of inferior officers. 33. every one—insert "with." 35. vambrace—armor for the forearm. 35. Pocones—blood root. 37. wings abroad—wings spread out.

to a long house, where thirtie or fortie tall fellowes did guard him; and ere long more bread and venison was brought him then would haue served twentie men. I thinke his stomacke at that time was not very good; what he left they put in baskets and tyed over his head. About midnight they set  
 5 the meate againe before him, all this time not one of them would eate a bit with him, till the next morning they brought him as much more; and then did they eate all the old, and reserved the new as they had done the other, which made him thinke they would fat him to eat him. Yet in this desperate estate to defend him from the cold, one *Maocassater* brought him his gowne,  
 10 in requitall of some beads and toyes *Smith* had given him at his first arrivall in *Virginia*.

Two dayes after a man would haue slain him (but that the guard prevented it) for the death of his sonne, to whom they conducted him to recover the poore man then breathing his last. *Smith* told them that at *Iames* towne he  
 15 had a water would doe it, if they would let him fetch it, but they would not permit that: but made all the preparations they could to assault *Iames* towne, crauing his advice; and for recompence he should haue life, libertie, land, and women. In part of a Table booke he writ his minde to them at the Fort, what was intended, how they should follow that direction to affright the messen-  
 20 gers, and without fayle send him such things as he writ for. And an Inventory with them. The difficultie and danger, he told the Salvages, of the Mines, great gunnes, and other Engins exceedingly affrighted them, yet according to his request they went to *Iames* towne, in as bitter weather as could be of frost and snow, and within three dayes returned with an answer.

But when they came to *Iame[s]* towne, seeing men sally out as he had told them they would, they fled; yet in the night they came againe to the same place where he had told them they should receiue an answer, and such things as he had promised them: which they found accordingly, and with which they returned with no small expedition, to the wonder of them all that heard  
 30 it, that he could either divine, or the paper could speake.

Then they led him to the *Youthtanunds*, the *Mattapanients*, the *Payankatanks*, the *Nantaughtacunds*, and *Onawmanients* vpon the rivers of *Rapahanock*, and *Patawomek*; over all those rivers, and backe againe by divers other severall Nations, to the Kings habitation at *Pamavnee*: where they  
 35 entertained him with most strange and fearefull Coniurations;

*As if neare led to hell,  
 Amongst the Devils to dwell.*

Not long after, early in a morning a great fire was made in a long house, and a mat spread on the one side, as on the other; on the one they caused  
 40 him to sit, and all the guard went out of the house, and presently came skipping in a great grim fellow, all painted over with coale, mingled with oyle; and many Snakes and Wesels skins stuffed with mosse, and all their tayles tyed together, so as they met on the crowne of his head in a tassell; and round

3. stomacke—appetite. 4. tyed over his head—i.e., tied to the wall over his head. 5. meate—food. 9. gowne—cloak. 18. Table booke—memorandum book. 20-21. Inventory—list of the things he wanted. 29. expedition—speed. 30. divine—prophecy.

about the tassell was a Coronet of feathers, the skins hanging round about his head, backe, and shoulders, and in a manner covered his face; with a hellish voyce, and a rattle in his hand. With most strange gestures and passions he began his invocation, and environed the fire with a circle of meale; which done, three more such like devils came rushing in with the like antique tricks, painted halfe blacke, halfe red: but all their eyes were painted white, and some red stroakes like Muchato's, along their cheekes: round about him those fiends daunced a pretty while, and then came in three more as vgly as the rest; with red eyes, and white stroakes over their blacke faces, at last they all sat down right against him; three of them on the one hand of the chiefe Priest, and three on the other. Then all with their rattles began a song, which ended, the chiefe Priest layd down fve wheat cornes: then straying his armes and hands with such violence that he sweat, and his veynes swelled, he began a short Oration; at the conclusion they all gaue a short groane; and then layd down three graines more. After that, began their song againe, and then another Oration, ever laying downe so many cornes as before, till they had twice incircled the fire; that done, they tooke a bunch of little stickes prepared for that purpose, continuing still their devotion, and at the end of every song and Oration, they layd downe a sticke betwixt the divisions of Corne. Till night, neither he nor they did either eate or drinke; and then they feasted merrily, with the best provisions they could make. Three dayes they vsed this Ceremony; the meaning whereof they told him, was to know if he intended them well or no. The circle of meale signified their Country, the circles of corne the bounds of the Sea, and the stickes his Country. They imagined the world to be flat and round, like a trencher; and they in the midst.

After this they brought him a bagge of gunpowder, which they carefully preserved till the next spring, to plant as they did their corne; because they would be acquainted with the nature of that seede.

*Opitchapam* the Kings brother invited him to his house, where, with as many platters of bread, foule, and wild beasts, as did environ him, he bid him wellcome; but not any of them would eate a bit with him, but put vp all the remainder in Baskets.

At his returne to *Opechancanoughs*, all the Kings women, and their children, flocked about him for their parts; as a due by Custome, to be merry with such fragments.

*But his waking mind in hydeous dreames did oft see wondrous shapes,  
Of bodies strange, and huge in growth, and of stupendious makes.*

At last they brought him to *Meronomoco*, where was *Powhatan* their Emperor. Here more than two hundred of those grim Courtiers stood wondering at him, as he had beene a monster; till *Powhatan* and his trayne had put themselves in their greatest braveries. Before a fire vpon a seat like a bedsted, he sat covered with a great robe, made of *Rarowcun* skinnes, and all

5. antique—antic. 7. Muchato's—mustachio. 12. cornes—grains. 25. trencher—flat piece of wood used for a plate. 39. At last—January 5, 1608 (Arber-Bradley). 42. braveries—costumes. 43. Rarowcun—raccoon.



the tayles hanging by. On either hand did sit a young wench of 16 or 18 yeares, and along on each side the house, two rowes of men, and behind them as many women, with all their heads and shoulders painted red: many of their heads bedecked with the white downe of Birds; but every one with something: and a great chayne of white beads about their necks.

At his entrance before the King, all the people gaue a great shout. The Queene of *Appamatuck* was appointed to bring him water to wash his hands, and another brought him a bunch of feathers, in stead of a Towell to dry them: having feasted him after their best barbarous manner they could, a long consultation was held, but the conclusion was, two great stones were brought before *Powhatan*: then as many as could layd hands on him, dragged him to them, and thereon laid his head, and being ready with their clubs, to beate out his braines, *Pocahontas* the Kings dearest daughter, when no in-treaty could preuaile, got his head in her armes, and laid her owne vpon his to saue him from death: whereat the Emperour was contented he should liue to make him hatchets, and her bells, beads, and copper; for they thought him aswell of all occupations as themselues. For the King himselfe will make his owne robes, shoes, bowes, arrowes, pots; plant, hunt, or doe any thing so well as the rest.

They say he bore a pleasant shew,  
But sure his heart was sad.  
For who can pleasant be, and rest,  
That liues in feare and dread:  
And having life suspected, doth  
It still suspected lead.

Two dayes after, *Powhatan* having disguised himselfe in the most fearefullest manner he could, caused Captain *Smith* to be brought forth to a great house in the woods, and there vpon a mat by the fire to be left alone. Not long after from behinde a mat that divided the house, was made the most dolefullest noyse he ever heard; then *Powhatan* more like a devill then a man, with some two hundred more as blacke as himselfe, came vnto him and told him now they were friends, and presently he should goe to *Iames* towne, to send him two great gunnes, and a gryndstone, for which he would giue him the Country of *Capahowosick*, and for ever esteeme him as his sonne *Nantaquoud*.

So to *Iames* towne with 12 guides *Powhatan* sent him. That night they quartered in the woods, he still expecting (as he had done all this long time of his imprisonment) every houre to be put to one death or other: for all their feasting. But almightie God (by his diuine providence) had mollified the hearts of those sterne *Barbarians* with compassion. The next morning betimes they came to the Fort, where *Smith* having vsed the Salvages with what kindnesse he could, he shewed *Rawhunt*, *Powhatans* trusty servant, two demi-Culverings and a millstone to carry [to] *Powhatan*: they found them somewhat too heauie; but when they did see him discharge them, being

12. him—Smith. 12. them—the stones. 26. Two dayes after—January 7, 1608 (Arber-Bradley). 34. Capahowosick—on the north bank of the York River near Gloucester. 36. That night—January 7, 1608 (Arber-Bradley). 40. next morning—January 8, 1608 (Arber-Bradley). 43. demi-Culverings—culverins were a variety of cannon.

loaded with stones, among the boughs of a great tree loaded with Isickles, the yce and branches came so tumbling downe, that the poore Salvages ran away halfe dead with feare. But at least we regained some conference with them, and gaue them such toyes; and sent to *Powhatan*, his women, and children such presents, as gaue them in generall full content.

5

Now in *Iames Towne* they were all in combustion, the strongest preparing once more to run away with the Pinnacle; which with the hazzard of his life, with Sakre falcon and musket shot, *Smith* forced now the third time to stay or sinke.

Some no better then they should be, had plotted with the President, the next day to haue put him to death by the Leviticall law, for the liues of *Robinson* and *Emry*; pretending the fault was his that had led them to their ends: but he quickly tooke such order with such Lawyers, that he layd them by the heeles till he sent some of them prisoners for *England*.

10

Now ever once in foure or fiue dayes, *Pocahontas* with her attendants, brought him so much provision, that saved many of their liues, that els for all this had starved with hunger.

15

*Thus from numbe death our good God sent reliefe,  
The sweete asswager of all other grieve.*

His relation of the plenty he had seene, especially at *Werawocomoco*, and of the state and bountie of *Powhatan*, (which till that time was vnknowne) so revived their dead spirits (especially the loue of *Pocahontas*) as all mens feare was abandoned.

20

Thus you may see what difficulties still crossed any good indeavour; and the good successe of the businesse being thus oft brought to the very period of destruction; yet you see by what strange means God hath still delivered it.

25

As for the insufficiency of them admitted in Commission, that error could not be prevented by the Electors; there being no other choise, and all strangers to each others education, qualities, or disposition.

And if any deeme it a shame to our Nation to haue any mention made of those inormities, led him peruse the Histories of the Spaniards Discoveries and Plantations, where they may see how many mutinies, disorders, and dissensions haue accompanied them, and crossed their attempts: which being knowne to be particular mens offences; doth take away the generall scorne and contempt, which malice, presumption, covetousnesse, or ignorance might produce; to the scandall and reproach of those, whose actions and valiant resolutions deserue a more worthy respect.

30

35

Now whether it had beene better for Captaine *Smith*, to haue concluded with any of those severall proiects, to haue abandoned the Countrey, with some ten or twelue of them, who were called the better sort, and haue left Master *Hunt* our Preacher, Master *Anthony Gosnoll*, a most honest, worthy, and industrious Gentleman, Master *Thomas Wotton*, and some 27 others of his Countrymen to the fury of the Salvages, famine, and all manner of mischiefs, and inconveniences, (for they were but fortie in all to keepe possession

40

8. falcon—a light cannon. 10. President—Ratcliffe. 10-11. next day—January 9 (Arber-Bradley). 11. Leviticall law—Cf. Levit. 24:17. 20. Werawocomoco—near the present Gloucester. 27. admitted in Commission—commissioned as members of the Council.

of this large Country;) or starue himselve with them for company, for want of lodging: or but adventuring abroad to make them provision, or by his opposition to preserue the action, and saue all their liues; I leaue to the censure of all honest men to consider. But

- 5                   *We men imagine in our Iolitie,  
That 'tis all one, or good or bad to be.  
But then anone wee alter this againe,  
If happily wee feele the sence of paine;  
For then we're turn'd into a mourning vaine.*

10

## CHAPTER III

THE ARRIVALL OF THE FIRST SUPPLY, WITH THEIR PROCEEDINGS,  
AND THE SHIPS RETURNÉ

- All this time our care was not so much to abandon the Countrey; but the Treasurer and Councell in *England*, were as diligent and carefull to supply vs.  
15 Two good ships they sent vs, with neare a hundred men, well furnished with all things could be imagined necessary, both for them and vs; The one commanded by Captaine *Newport*: the other by Captaine *Francis Nelson*, an honest man, and an expert Marriner. But such was the lewardnesse of his Ship (that though he was within the sight of *Cape Henry*) by stormy contrary winds was he forced so farre to Sea, that the *West Indies* was the next  
20 land, for the repaire of his Masts, and reliefe of wood and water.

- But *Newport* got in and arrived at *Iames Towne*, not long after the redemption of Captaine *Smith*. To whom the Salvages, as is sayd, every other day repaired, with such provisions that sufficiently did serue them from hand  
25 to mouth: part alwayes they brought him as Presents from their Kings, or *Pocahontas*; the rest he as their Market Clarke set the price himselfe, how they should sell: so he had enchanted these poore soules being their prisoner; and now *Newport*, whom he called his Father arriving, neare as directly as he foretold, they esteemed him as an Oracle, and had them at that submission  
30 he might command them what he listed. That God that created all things they knew he adored for his God: they would also in their discourses tearme the God of Captaine *Smith*.

*Thus the Almightye was the bringer on,  
The guide, path, terme, all which was God alone.*

- 35 But the President and Councell so much envied his estimation among the Salvages, (though we all in generall equally participated with him of the good thereof,) that they wrought it into the Salvages vnderstandings (by their great bounty in giving foure times more for their commodities then *Smith* appointed) that their greatnesse and authoritie as much exceeded his, as  
40 their bountie and liberalitie.

9. *vaine*—Here follows in the original the statement: "Written by Thomas Studley, the first Cape Merchant in Virginia, Robert Fenton, Edward Harrington, and I. S." (i.e., John Smith). Cape merchant: principal authorized dealer. 22-23. *redemption*—the evening of January 8, 1608, when Smith returned (Arber-Bradley). 26. *Clarke*—clerk.

Now the arrivall of this first supply so overioyed us, that wee could not devise too much to please the Marriners. We gaue them libertie to trucke or trade at their pleasures. But in a short time it followed, that could not be had for a pound of Copper, which before was sould vs for an ounce: thus ambition and sufferance cut the throat of our trade, but confirmed their opinion of the greatnesse of Captaine *Newport*, (wherewith *Smith* had possessed *Powhatan*) especially by the great presents *Newport* often sent him, before he could prepare the Pinnacle to goe and visit him: so that this great Salvage desired also to see him. A great coyle there was to set him forward. 5

When he went he was accompanied with Captaine *Smith*, and Master *Scrivener*, a very wise understanding Gentleman, newly arrived and admitted of the Councell, with thirtie or fortie chosen men for their guard. 10

Arriving at *Werowocomoco*, *Newports* conceit of this great Savage bred many doubts and suspitions of trecheries, which *Smith* to make appeare was needlesse, with twentie men well appointed, vndertooke to encounter the worst that could happen: Knowing 15

*All is but one, and selfe-same hand, that thus  
Both one while scourgeth, and that helped vs.*

These, with nine others (whose names I haue forgotten) comming a-shore, landed amongst a many of creekes, over which they were to passe [by] such poore bridges, onely made of a few cratches thrust in the ose, and three or foure poles laid on them, and at the end of them the like, tyed together onely with barkes of trees, that it made them much suspect those bridges were but traps. Which caused *Smith* to make diuerse Salvages goe over first, keeping some of the chiefe as hostage till halfe his men were passed, to make a guard for himselfe and the rest. 20 25

But finding all things well, by two or three hundred Salvages they were kindly conducted to their towne. Where *Powhatan* strained himselfe to the vtmost of his greatnesse to entertaine them, with great shouts of ioy, Orations of protestations; and with the most plenty of victualls he could provide to feast them. 30

Sitting vpon his bed of mats, his pillow of leather imbrodered (after their rude manner with pearle and white Beads) his attyre a faire robe of skinnnes as large as an Irish mantell: at his head and feete a handsome young woman: on each side his house sat twentie of his Concubines, their heads and shoulders painted red, with a great chaine of white beads about each of their neckes. Before those sat his chieftest men in like order in his arbour-like house, and more then fortie platters of fine bread stood as a guard in two fyles on each side the doore. Foure or fiue hundred people made a guard behinde them for our passage: and Proclamation was made, none vpon paine of death to presume to doe vs any wrong or discourtesie. 35 40

With many pretty Discourses to renew their old acquaintance, this great King and our Captaine spent the time, till the ebbe left our Barge aground.

9. coyle—fuss. 9. forward—February, 1608 (Arber-Bradley). 13. conceit—opinion. 18. vs.—Here follow in the original the names of eleven gentlemen. 21. cratches—wooden gratings or hurdles. 21. ose—ooze. 34. Irish mantell—a long plaid or blanket worn by the rural Irish of the period, often their only covering.

Then renewing their feasts with feates, dauncing and singing, and such like mirth, we quartered that night with *Powhatan*.

The next day *Newport* came a shore and receiued as much content as those people could giue him: a boy named *Thomas Salvage* was then giuen vnto  
 5 *Powhatan*, whom *Newport* called his sonne; for whom *Powhatan* gaue him *Namontack* his trustie servant, and one of a shrewd, subtil capacitie.

Three or foure dayes more we spent in feasting, dauncing, and trading, wherein *Powhatan* carried himselfe so proudly, yet discreetly (in his salvage manner) as made vs all admire his naturall gifts, considering his education.

10 As scorning to trade as his subiects did; he bespake *Newport* in this manner.

*Captaine Newport, it is not agreeable to my greatnesse, in this pedling manner to trade for trifles; and I esteeme you also a great Werowance. Therefore lay me downe all your commodities together; what I like I will take, and in recompence give you what I thinke fitting their value.*

15 *Captaine Smith* being our interpreter, regarding *Newport* as his father, knowing best the disposition of *Powhatan*, tould vs his intent was but onely to cheat vs; yet *Captaine Newport* thinking to out braue this Salvage in ostentation of greatnesse, and so to bewitch him with him bountie, as to haue what he listed, it so hapned, that *Powhatan* hauing his desire, valued his  
 20 corne at such a rate, that I thinke it better cheape in *Spaine*: for we had not foure bushells for that we expected to haue twentie hogsheds.

This bred some vnkindnesse betweene our two Captaines; *Newport* seeking to please the vnsatiable desire of the Salvage, *Smith* to cause the Salvage to please him; but smothering his distast to avoyd the Saluages suspition,  
 25 glanced in the eyes of *Powhatan* many trifles, who fixed his humor vpon a few blew beades. A long time he importunately desired them, but *Smith* seemed so much the more to affect them, as being composed of a most rare substance of the coulour of the skyes, and not to be worne but by the greatest kings in the world. This made him halfe madde to be the owner of such strange  
 30 Iewells: so that ere we departed, for a pound or two of blew beades, he brought ouer my king for 2. or 300. Bushells of corne; yet parted good friends.

The like entertainment we found of *Opechankanough* king of *Pamavunkee*, whom also he in like manner fitted (at the like rates) with blew beads: which  
 35 grew by this meanes, of that estimation, that none durst weare any of them but their great kings, their wiues and children.

And so we returned all well to *Iames* towne, where this new supply being lodged with the rest, accidentally fired their quarters, and so the towne: which being but thatched with reeds, the fire was so fierce as it burnt their Pallisado's, (though eight or ten yards distant) with their Armes, bedding, apparell, and much priuate prouision. Good Master *Hunt* our Preacher lost all  
 40 his Library, and all he had but the cloathes on his backe: yet none neuer heard him repine at his losse. This happned in the winter in that extreame frost. 1607.

Now though we had victuall sufficient I meane onely of Oatmeale, meale

12. *Werowance*—chief. 18. *him*—should read "his." 36. *returned*—March 9, 1608 (Arber-Bradley). 37. *accidentally*—insert "had" before this adverb. 43. 1607—1607-08 (Arber-Bradley).

and corne: yet the Ship staying 14. weekes when shee might as wel haue beene gone in 14. dayes, spent a great part of that, and neare all the rest that was sent to be landed.

When they departed what the[i]re discretion could spare vs, to make a little poore meale or two, we called feastes, to relish our mouthes: of each somewhat they left vs, yet I must confesse, those that had either money, spare clothes, credit to giue billes of paiment, gold rings, furr, or any such comodities, were euer welcome to this remouing tauerne, such was our patience to obay such vile Commanders, and buy our owne provisions at 15. times the value, suffering them feast (we bearing the charge) yet must not repine, but fast, least we should incurre the censure of factious and seditious persons: and then leakage, ship-rats, and other casualties occasioned them losse: but the vessels and remnants (for totals) we were glad to receaue with all our hearts to make vp the account, highly commending their prouidence for preserving that, least they should discourage any more to come to vs.

Now for all this plenty our ordynary was but meale and water, so that this great charge little releued our wants, whereby with the extremitie of the bitter cold frost and those defects, more then halfe of vs dyed.

I cannot deny but both *Smith* and *Skriuener* did their best to amend what was amisse, but with the President went the maior part, that the[i]re hornes were to short.

But the worst was our gilded refiners with their golden promises made all men their slaues in hope of recompences; there was no talke, no hope, no worke, but dig gold, wash gold, refine gold, loade gold, such a bruit of gold, that one mad fellow desired to be buried in the sands least they should by the[i]re art make gold of his bones: little neede there was and lesse reason, the ship should stay, the[i]re wages run on, our victualls consume 14. weekes, that the Mariners might say, they did helpe to build such a golden Church that we can say the raine washed neere to nothing in 14. dayes.

Were it that captaine *Smith* would not applaude all those golden inventions, because they admitted him not to the sight of their trialls nor golden consultations, I know not; but I haue heard him oft question with Captaine *Martin* and tell him, except he could shew him a more substantiall triall, he was not inamoured with their durty skill, breathing out these and many other passions, neuer any thing did more torment him, then to see all necessary busines neglected, to fraught such a drunken ship with so much gilded durt.

Till then we neuer accounted, Captaine *Newport* a refiner, who being ready to set saile for *England*, and we not hauing any vse of Parliaments, Plaies, Petitions, Admiralls, Records, Interpreters, Chronologers, Courts of Plea, nor Iustices of peace, sent Master *Wingfield* and Captaine *Archer* home with him, that had ingrossed all those titles, to seeke some better place of imployment.

*Oh cursed gold, those hunger-starved movers,  
To what misfortunes lead'st thou all those lovers!  
For all the China wealth, nor Indies can  
Suffice the minde of an au'ritious man.*

1. 14. weekes—January 8-April 10, 1608 (Arber-Bradley). 16. ordynary—ordinary meals.  
25. mad fellow—joker. 39. Admiralls—in the general sense of viceroys.

# EDWARD TAYLOR

1645? - 1729

- 1645? Born in Leicestershire, in or near Coventry, probably of a dissenting family. Went to school for a time at Bagworth.
- 1668 July 5, arrived at Boston, where he was welcomed by Increase Mather and other important colonials. On July 23, admitted as a sophomore to Harvard College, where he served as college butler.
- 1671 Graduated from Harvard College, Samuel Sewall being a member of his class. In December he accepted a call to a small church at Westfield, Massachusetts, in the Connecticut Valley.
- 1675 November 5, married Elizabeth Fitch, daughter of a clergyman in Norwich, Connecticut, by whom he had seven children, none surviving him.
- 1679 Formally ordained as pastor of the Westfield church.
- 1689 Death of Mrs. Taylor. June 2, married Ruth Wyllys, daughter of Samuel Wyllys of Hartford, Connecticut, by whom he had six children.
- 1720 Recipient of an M.A. degree from Harvard College.
- 1726 The Rev. Nehemiah Bull, his successor, joined him in the pastorate at Westfield.
- 1729 June 24, died at Westfield.

EDITIONS: Thomas H. Johnson published in 1939 *The Poetical Works of Edward Taylor*, Rockland Editions (New York), which contains the best of Taylor's poetry, drawn from manuscripts in the Yale University Library. This also contains a bibliographical account of writings by and about Taylor and a biographical sketch. These should be supplemented by the sketch by Johnson in Volume XXI (Supplement One) of the *Dictionary of American Biography*. Taylor's diary may be read in the *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Vol. XVIII (1881), pp. 4-18.

Of the three principal poets of seventeenth-century New England, Anne Bradstreet, Michael Wigglesworth, and Edward Taylor, the last-named was the last to be discovered, largely because he forbade his heirs to publish his work. The world owes the discovery of him to the diligence of Thomas H. Johnson of Lawrenceville, New Jersey, who unearthed the productions of this literary and religious genius in the manuscript collections of Yale University and published his findings in 1939. Johnson's volume does not contain all that Taylor wrote, but it contains all the best that he wrote.

Taylor's poems fall into two broad divisions, according to Mr. Johnson: "God's Determinations" and "Sacramental Meditations." The "Preface" and the "Prologue" to "God's Determinations" are here reprinted as characteristic expressions of Tay-

lor's poetic energy in imagery, conceit, and metrical movement as well as of his sense of the greatness and goodness of God and of the rapture with which the poet contemplates the work of the Eternal. The full title of the section in the *Poetical Works* is "God's Determinations Touching his Elect: and the Elects' Combat in their Conversion, and Coming up to God in Christ, together with the Comfortable Effects Thereof," a phrase which at once defines the poems and indicates something of Taylor's theological position. The other poems here reprinted are, with two exceptions, from the "Sacramental Meditations"; they will surprise those who believe that Calvinism was merely a dour religion by the sweetness of their spirit and by the way everything from a spider to a spinning wheel is made to illuminate Christ's affection and the love of God.

## THE PREFACE

Infinity, when all things it beheld,  
In Nothing, and of Nothing all did build,  
Upon what Base was fixt the Lath, wherein  
He turn'd this Globe, and riggalld it so trim?  
Who blew the Bellows of his Furnace  
Vast? 5  
Or held the Mould wherein the world was  
Cast?  
Who laid its Corner Stone? Or whose Com-  
mand?  
Where stand the Pillars upon which it  
stands?  
Who Lac'de and Fillitted the earth so fine,  
With Rivers like green Ribbons Smar-  
dine? 10  
Who made the Sea's its Selvedge, and it locks  
Like a Quilt Ball within a Silver Box?  
Who spread its Canopy? Or Curtains Spun?  
Who in this Bowling Alley bowld the Sun?  
Who made it always when it rises set: 15  
To go at once both down, and up to get?  
Who th' Curtain rods made for this Tapis-  
try?  
Who hung the twinkling Lanthorns in the  
Sky?  
Who? who did this? or who is he? Why,  
know  
It's Onely Might Almighty this did doe. 20  
His hand hath made this noble worke which  
Stands  
His Glorious Handywork not made by  
hands.

Who spake all things from nothing: and with  
ease  
Can speake all things to nothing, if he please.  
Whose Little finger at his pleasure Can 25  
Out mete ten thousand worlds with halfe a  
Span:  
Whose Might Almighty can by half a looks  
Root up the rocks and rock the hills by th'  
roots.  
Can take this mighty World up in his hande,  
And shake it like a Squitchen or a  
Wand. 30  
Whose single Frown will make the Heavens  
shake  
Like as an aspen leafe the Winde makes  
quake.  
Oh! what a might is this! Whose single  
frown  
Doth shake the world as it would shake it  
down?  
Which All from Nothing fet, from Nothing,  
All: 35  
Hath All on Nothing set, lets Nothing fall.  
Gave all to nothing Man indeed, whereby  
Through nothing man all might him Glorify.  
In Nothing is imbosst the brightest Gem  
More pretious than all pretiousness in  
them. 40  
But Nothing man did throw down all by sin:  
And darkened that lightsom Gem in him,  
That now his Brightest Diamond is grown  
Darker by far than any Coalpit Stone.

4. riggalld—grooved. 9. Fillitted—filleted, bound. 10. Smaragdine—emerald. 11. Selvedge—the edge of a piece of woven material so finished as to prevent raveling. 12. Quilt Ball—i.e., the earth is compared to a ball covered or finished in quilted work in the sense that quilting implies alternations of colors. 30. Squitchen—apparently a coinage by Taylor. "Possibly it is a dialect spelling for the obsolete substantive *switching*, a switch or stick" (Johnson). 35. fet—fetch. 42. darkened—here, a trisyllable.



## PROLOGUE

Lord, Can a Crumb of Earth the Earth out-weigh:

Outmatch all mountains, nay the Chrystall Sky?

Imbosom in't designs that shall Display  
And trace into the Boundless Deity?

Yea, hand a Pen whose moysture doth  
guild ore

Eternall Glory with a glorious glore. 5

If it its Pen had of an Angels Quill,  
And sharpened on a Pretious Stone ground  
tite,

And dipt in Liquid Gold, and mov'de by  
skill

In Christall leaves should golden Letters  
write, 10

It would but blot and blur: yea, jag and jar,  
Unless thou mak'st the Pen and Scribener.

I am this Crumb of Dust which is design'd  
To make my Pen unto thy Praise alone,  
And my dull Phancy I would gladly  
grinde 15

Unto an Edge on Zions Pretious Stone:  
And Write in Liquid Gold upon thy Name  
My Letters till thy glory forth doth flame.

Let not th'attempts breake down my Dust I  
pray,

Nor laugh thou them to scorn, but pardon  
give. 20

Inspire this Crumb of Dust till it display  
Thy Glory through't: and then thy dust shall  
live.

Its failings then thou'lt overlook I trust,  
They being Slips slipt from thy Crumb of  
Dust.

Thy Crumb of Dust breaths two words from  
its breast; 25

That thou wilt guide its pen to write aright  
To Prove thou art, and that thou art the best,  
And shew thy Properties to shine most bright.  
And then thy Works will shine as flowers on  
Stems,

Or as in Jewellery Shops, do jems. 30

THE JOY OF CHURCH FELLOWSHIP RIGHTLY  
ATTENDED

In Heaven soaring up, I dropt an Eare  
On Earth: and oh! sweet Melody!

And listening, found it was the Saints who  
were

Encroacht for Heaven that sang for Joy.

For in Christs Coach they sweetly sing, 5  
As they to Glory ride therein.

Oh! joyous hearts! Enfir'de with holy Flame!  
Is speech thus tasseled with praise?

Will not your inward fire of Joy contain,  
That it in open flames doth blaze? 10  
For in Christ[s] Coach Saints sweetly sing,  
As they to Glory ride therein.

And if a string do slip by Chance, they soon  
Do screw it up again: whereby

They set it in a more melodious Tune 15  
And a Diviner Harmony.

For in Christs Coach they sweetly sing,  
As they to Glory ride therein.

In all their Acts, publick and private, nay,  
And secret too, they praise impart. 20

But in their Acts Divine, and Worship, they  
With Hymns do offer up their Heart.

Thus in Christs Coach they sweetly sing,  
As they to Glory ride therein.

Some few not in; and some whose Time and  
Place 25

Block up this Coaches way, do goe  
As Travellers afoot: and so do trace

The Road that gives them right thereto;  
While in this Coach these sweetly sing

As they to Glory ride therein. 30

UPON A SPIDER CATCHING  
A FLY

Thou sorrow, venom Elfe:  
Is this thy play,

12. **Scribener**—scrivener, professional writer. 4. **Encroacht**—in the sense of having proceeded beyond the ordinary limits of human nature. 13. **string**—of a musical instrument.

To spin a web out of thyselfe  
To Catch a Fly?  
For why?

5

Thy Grace to breake the Cord; afford  
Us Glorys Gate  
And State.

45

I saw a pettish wasp  
Fall foule therein:  
Whom yet thy whorle pins did no[t hasp]  
Lest he should fling  
His sting.

10

We'l Nightingale sing like,  
When pearcht on high  
In Glories Cage, thy glory, bright:  
[Yea,] thankfully,  
For joy.

50

But as afraid, remote  
Didst stand hereat,  
And with thy little fingers stroke  
And gently tap  
His back.

15

## HUSWIFERY

Thus gently him didst treat  
Lest he should pet,  
And in a froppish, aspish heate  
Should greatly fret  
Thy net.

20

Make me, O Lord, thy Spin[n]ing Wheele  
compleat;  
Thy Holy Worde my Distaff make for  
mee.  
Make mine Affections thy Swift Flyers neate,  
And make my Soule thy holy Spooles to  
bee.  
My Conversation make to be thy Reelee, 5  
And reele the yarn thereon spun of thy  
Wheele.

Whereas the silly Fly,  
Caught by its leg,  
Thou by the throate took'st hastily,  
And 'hinde the head  
Bite Dead.

25

This goes to pot, that not  
Nature doth call.  
Strive not above what strength hath got,  
Lest in the brawle  
Thou fall.

30

This Frey seems thus to us:  
Hells Spider gets  
His intrails spun to whip Cords thus,  
And wove to nets,  
And sets.

35

To tangle Adams race  
In's stratagems  
To their Destructions, Spoil'd, made base  
By venom things,  
Damn'd Sins.

40

But mighty, Gracious Lord,  
Communicate

Make me thy Loom then, knit therein this  
Twine:  
And make thy Holy Spirit, Lord, winde  
quills:  
Then weave the Web thyselfe. The yarn is  
fine.  
Thine Ordinances make my Fulling  
Mills. 10  
Then dy the same in Heavenly Colours  
Choice,  
All pinkt with Varnish't Flowers of Para-  
dise.  
Then cloath therewith mine Understanding,  
Will,  
Affections, Judgment, Conscience, Mem-  
ory;  
My Words and Actions, that their shine may  
fill 15  
My wayes with glory and thee glorify.  
Then mine apparell shall display before yee  
That I am Cloathd in Holy robes for glory.

8. **whorle pins**—apparently the pins by which the whorl or fly-wheel is attached to the spindle of a spinning-wheel. 8. **hasp**—clamp down upon. 17. **pet**—i.e., fall into a pet; ill-humor. 18. **froppish**—peevish. 31. **Frey**—fray. 33. **whip Cords**—whipcord, a tough hempen cord. 8. **quills**—spools. 10. **Fulling Mills**—mills for cleansing cloth with fuller's earth or soap. 12. **pinkt**—ornamented. 12. **Varnish't**—bright, glossy.

## THE REFLECTION

CANTICLES \* II:1: I AM THE ROSE OF SHARON

Lord, art thou at the Table Head above  
 Meat, Med'cine, Sweetness, sparkling  
 Beautys, to

Enamour Souls with Flaming Flakes of  
 Love,

And not my Trencher, nor my Cup o're-  
 flow?

Ben't I a bidden guest? Oh! sweat mine  
 Eye:

O'reflow with Teares: Oh! draw thy foun-  
 tains dry. 5

Shall I not smell thy sweet, oh! Sharons  
 Rose?

Shall not mine Eye salute thy Beauty?  
 Why?

Shall thy sweet leaves their Beautious sweets  
 upclose?

As halfe ashamde my sight should on  
 them ly? 10

Woe's me! For this my sighs shall be in  
 grain,

Offer'd on Sorrows Altar for the same.

Had not my Soule's, thy Conduit, Pipes stopt  
 bin

With mud, what Ravishment would'st  
 thou Convey?

Let Graces Golden Spade dig till the  
 Spring 15

Of tears arise, and cleare this filth away.

Lord, let thy Spirit raise my sighings till  
 These Pipes my soule do with thy sweet-  
 ness fill.

Earth once was Paradise of Heaven below,  
 Till inkefac'd sin had it with poyson  
 stockt; 20

And Chast this Paradise away into  
 Heav'ns upmost Loft, and it in Glory  
 Lockt.

But thou, sweet Lord, hast with thy golden  
 Key  
 Unlock[t] the Doore, and made a golden  
 day.

Once at thy Feast, I saw thee Pearle-like  
 stand 25

'Tween Heaven and Earth, where Heavens  
 Bright glory all

In streams fell on thee, as a floodgate and,  
 Like Sun Beams through thee on the  
 World to Fall.

Oh! Sugar sweet then! My Deare sweet  
 Lord, I see

Saints Heaven-lost Happiness restor'd by  
 thee. 30

Shall Heaven and Earth's bright Glory all  
 up lie,

Like Sun Beams bundled in the sun in  
 thee?

Dost thou sit Rose at Table Head, where I  
 Do sit, and Carv'st no morsell sweet for  
 mee?

So much before, so little now! Sprindge,  
 Lord, 35

Thy Rosie Leaves, and me their Glee  
 afford.

Shall not thy Rose my Garden fresh per-  
 fume?

Shall not thy Beauty my dull Heart assaile?

Shall not thy golden gleams run through this  
 gloom?

Shall my black Velvet Mask thy fair Face  
 Vaile? 40

Pass o're my Faults; shine forth, bright  
 sun; arise!

Enthone thy Rosy-selfe within mine Eyes.

\* Canticles—in the King James Bible, The Song of Solomon. 4. Trencher—flat wooden plate. 21. Chast—chased. 35. Sprindge—spread out, extend over (Johnson).

# WILLIAM BYRD II

1674 - 1744

## I. THE SCION OF A GREAT COLONIAL FAMILY (1674-1705)

- 1674 Born March 28, son of William and Mary Byrd, near the present city of Richmond, Virginia, heir to one of the richest landed proprietors in the colony.
- 1684 Sent to school in England; under supervision of his grandfather.
- 1690 Sent to Holland to study the Dutch commercial system; on return to London, entered as student of law in Middle Temple.
- 1696 Returned to Virginia; through father's influence elected member of the Assembly from Henrico County.
- 1697 Sent to England as one of two colonial representatives before the Board of Trade; attempted to defend Sir Edmund Andros against charges made by the Anglicans.
- 1698 Appointed colonial agent from Virginia in London. Member of the Royal Society (before 1698). Brilliant social career.

## II. PERIOD OF POLITICAL CONTROVERSY (1705-1726)

- 1705 Returned to Virginia on the news of his father's death (December 4, 1704), succeeding him in official life of the colony (receiver-general, 1706-1716(?); member of Council of State, 1709-1744).
- 1706 Married Lucy Parke, and later (1710) assumed the debts of her father.
- 1710 Arrival of Lieutenant-Governor Alexander Spotswood; beginning of his quarrel with Byrd over collection of taxes and appointment of judiciary.
- 1715 Byrd in London to denounce Spotswood as one who desired "his own absolute will." Spokesman of the landed gentry.
- 1716 Death of Mrs. Byrd (in London).
- 1717 Arrival in London of daughter, Evelyn (born July 16, 1707). Period of social brilliance. Evelyn's love affair with the Earl of Peterborough; she returned to Virginia, and died November 13, 1737.
- 1720 Byrd returned to Virginia in order to retain offices. Reconciliation with Spotswood. Appointed agent in London, Byrd immediately sailed for England.
- 1724 Married Maria Taylor of Kensington, mother of William Byrd III (1728-1777).

## III. "COLONEL WILLIAM BYRD, OF WESTOVER IN VIRGINIA, ESQR." (1726-1744)

- 1726 Final return to Virginia, living at Westover as a great colonial gentleman. Began to build up the richest library in the colonies.

- 1727-1728 Helped to settle boundary dispute between Virginia and North Carolina, the events forming the nucleus of *The History of the Dividing Line*.\*
- 1732 Made westward journey described in *A Progress to the Mines*.
- 1733 Bought 20,000 acres in North Carolina, his visit to which is recorded in *A Journey to the Land of Eden*.
- 1736 Surveyed bounds of "Northern Neck" in Virginia.
- 1736-1738(?) Worked over the original *Secret History of the Dividing Line* into *The History of the Dividing Line*. Years of financial strain.
- 1743 President of the Council of State.
- 1744 Died August 26.

BIOGRAPHIES: J. S. Bassett, ed., *The Writings of "Colonel William Byrd, of Westover in Virginia, Esqr.,"* Doubleday, Page, 1901, pp. xl-xxxviii; T. J. Wertenbaker, "Byrd, William," *Dictionary of American Biography*, Vol. III, pp. 383-84; P. A. Bruce, *The Virginia Plutarch*, University of North Carolina Press, 1929, 2 vols., Vol. I, pp. 134-54; R. C. Beatty, *William Byrd of Westover*, Houghton Mifflin, 1932. See also Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling, ed., *The Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover, 1709-1712*, Dietz Press, Richmond, 1941, and Maude H. Woodfin and Marion Tinling, ed., *Another Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover, 1739-1741, with Letters and Literary Exercises, 1696-1726*, Dietz Press, Richmond, 1942. For bibliography see *Literary History of the United States*, Vol. III, pp. 429-31.

EDITIONS: As *The Westover Manuscripts . . .*, Petersburg, 1841; *History of the Dividing Line and Other Tracts . . .*, ed. by T. H. Wynne, Richmond, 1866, 2 vols.; edition of J. S. Bassett (see above); *William Byrd's Histories of the Dividing Line . . .* with introduction and notes by W. K. Boyd, North Carolina Historical Commission, 1929 (containing *History* and *Secret History* on opposite pages). Popular edition: *Journey to the Land of Eden and Other Papers*, Macy-Masius, 1928.

The importance of the writings of William Byrd in the development of the American mind is manifold. They represent, in the first place, the utterance of a great Virginia gentleman who viewed the lower orders with a certain amused tolerance: in the contrast of social ranks implicit in his work one sees the distance which the Revolutionary leaders were to traverse toward social democracy. In the second place, he was a cultivated person who had at his finger tips the learning of the day; his writings are strewn with allusions to the classics, to current topics, to scientific theories, and to well-known objects. Inheriting the tradition of the Renaissance gentleman, Byrd was curious about all knowledge; and the *History of the Dividing Line* in particular is rich in scientific observations on the flora and fauna of the region traversed, on medical lore, on the habits of animals, and on the Indians. Byrd is at times a little credulous, though usually he writes with great shrewdness. But above all, his writing is still lively because of its vital style. The adjective which is usually applied to him is "sprightly," and sprightliness results in that play of humor, that sense of the odd in human behavior, that droll gravity, which places Byrd early in the ranks of American humorists. He is racy, he likes a good story, and is not too skeptical about its truth; and he takes a mischievous delight in recording the discomfiture of the pompous. With all these worldly characteristics, moreover, he ex-

\* For original records of the survey, and Byrd's first journal, see *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, Vol. II, pp. 750-57, 799-815.

hibits the growing religious tolerance of the eighteenth century. Yet, though he is amused at the demands for christenings in "Lubberland," dislikes puritan narrowness, and is no church zealot, Byrd has a profound faith in the goodness of life and in the direction of its concerns (for example, the surveying party) by the providence of God.

### [ LUBBERLAND ]

From *The History of the Dividing Line*. The vagueness of the earlier colonial charters left the boundary lines of the various British dominions in North America in confusion; and especially had there been constant bickering between Virginia and North Carolina after 1680 as to the common boundary line. An unsatisfactory survey in 1710 did not help matters; and after endless controversy a joint commission was appointed by the governors of the two colonies to settle the problem. The Virginia commissioners in actual charge of the survey were William Byrd, William Dandridge, and Richard Fitz-William; the North Carolina commissioners were Christopher Gale, Edward Moseley, William Little, and John Lovick. Both sides also appointed surveyors: Alexander Irvine and William Mayo for Virginia, Samuel Swann and Commissioner Moseley for North Carolina. The survey was begun at the seacoast (Currituck Inlet), where the commissioners met on March 5, 1728. By March 14 the line had been carried to the edge of the Dismal Swamp. The surveyors and twelve assistants plunged into the swamp, but the commissioners went around it and awaited the other half of the party on the western edge of the swamp, at the plantation of Thomas Speight of Perquimans County in North Carolina. At this point the selection in the text begins; the surveyors have just struggled through the swamp, and curious Carolinians, wondering whether their farms are in Virginia or North Carolina, have been swarming over the Speight plantation to gaze at the commissioners. The text is from Bassett's edition of the *Writings*.

[March 24, 1728] This being Sunday, we had a Numerous congregation, which flockt to our Quarters from all the adjacent Country. The News that our Surveyors were come out of the Dismal, increas'd the Number very much, because it wou'd give them an Opportunity of guessing, at least, whereabouts the Line wou'd cut, whereby they might form Some Judgment whether they belong'd to Virginia or Carolina. Those who had taken up Land within the Disputed Bounds were in great pain lest it should be found to ly in Virginia; because this being done contrary to an Express Order of that government, the Patentees had great reason to fear they should in that case have lost their land. But their Apprehensions were now at an end, when they understood that all the Territory which had been controverted was like to be left in Carolina.

In the afternoon, those who were to re-enter the Dismal were furnisht with the Necessary Provisions, and Order'd to repair the Over-Night to their Landlord, Peter Brinkley's, that they might be ready to begin their Business early on Monday Morning. Mr. Irvin was excus'd from the Fatigue, in complement to his Lungs; but Mr. Mayo and Mr. Swan were Robust enough to return upon that painful Service, and, to do them Justice, they went with great Alac-

9. **Patentees**—those who had acquired grants of land.

city. The Truth was, they now knew the worst of it; and cou'd guess pretty near at the time when they might hope to return to Land again.

- [March] 25. The air was chill'd this Morning with a Smart North-west Wind, which favour'd the Dismalites in their Dirty March. They return'd by the Path they had made in coming out, and with great Industry arriv'd in the Evening at the Spot where the Line had been discontinued.

After so long and laborious a Journey, they were glad to repose themselves on their couches of Cypress-bark, where their sleep was as sweet as it wou'd have been on a Bed of Finland Down.

- 10 In the mean time, we who stay'd behind had nothing to do, but to make the best observations we cou'd upon that Part of the Country. The Soil of our Landlord's Plantation, tho' none of the best, seem'd more fertile than any thereabouts, where the Ground is near as Sandy as the Desarts of Affrica, and consequently barren. The Road leading from thence to Edenton, being in distance about 27 Miles, lies upon a Ridge call'd Sandy-Ridge, which is so wretchedly Poor that it will not bring Potatoes.

- The Pines in this Part of the country are of a different Species from those that grow in Virginia: their bearded Leaves are much longer and their Cones much larger. Each Cell contains a Seed of the Size and Figure of a black-ey'd Pea, which, Shedding in November, is very good Mast for Hogs, and fattens them in a Short time.

- The Smallest of these Pines are full of Cones, which are 8 or 9 Inches long, and each affords commonly 60 or 70 Seeds. This Kind of Mast has the Advantage of all other, by being more constant, and less liable to be nippt by the Frost, or Eaten by the Caterpillars. The Trees also abound more with Turpentine, and consequently yield more Tarr, than either the Yellow or the White Pine; And for the same reason make more durable Timber for building. The Inhabitants hereabouts pick up Knots of Lightwood in Abundance, which they burn into tar, and then carry it to Norfolk or Nansimond for a Market.
- 30 The Tar made in this method is the less Valuable, because it is said to burn the Cordage, tho' it is full as good for all other uses, as that made in Sweden and Muscovy.

- Surely there is no place in the World where the Inhabitants live with less Labour than in N Carolina. It approaches nearer to the Description of Lubberland than any other, by the great felicity of the Climate, the easiness of raising Provisions, and the Slothfulness of the People.

- Indian Corn is of so great increase, that a little Pains will Subsist a very large Family with Bread, and then they may have meat without any pains at all, by the Help of the Low Grounds, and the great Variety of Mast that grows on the High-land. The Men, for their Parts, just like the Indians, im-

4. Dismalites—the surveyors. 9. Finland Down—that is, like eider down. 16. bring—bring forth. 18. bearded Leaves—that is, pine “leaves.” 28. Lightwood—resinous pine. 29. burn into tar—Crude tar can be made by heaping up pine wood, covering it over with earth, leaving only a small vent, and recovering the liquid tar which exudes. 29. Nansimond—Nansemond County in Virginia, just north of the Dismal Swamp. 30. burn—eat into. 33. Surely there is—This celebrated description of the North Carolinians does not appear in *The Secret History*, and was apparently added later. *The Secret History* contains only one short passage commenting unfavorably on North Carolina. 34-35. Lubberland—imaginary country where people live in perfect idleness.

pose all the Work upon the poor Women. They make their Wives rise out of their Beds early in the Morning, at the same time that they lye and Snore, till the Sun has run one third of his course, and disperst all the unwholesome Damps. Then, after Stretching and Yawning for half an Hour, they light their Pipes, and, under the Protection of a cloud of Smoak, venture out into the open Air; tho', if it happens to be never so little cold, they quickly return Shivering into the Chimney corner. When the Weather is mild, they stand leaning with both their arms upon the corn-field fence, and gravely consider whether they had best go and take a Small Heat at the Hough: but generally find reasons to put it off till another time.

Thus they loiter away their Lives, like Solomon's Sluggard, with their Arms across, and at the Winding up of the Year Scarcely have Bread to Eat.

To speak the Truth, tis a thorough Aversion to Labor that makes People file off to N Carolina, where Plenty and a Warm Sun confirm them in their Disposition to Laziness for their whole Lives.

[March] 26. Since we were like to be confin'd to this place, till the People return'd out of the Dismal, twas agreed that our Chaplain might Safely take a turn to Edenton, to preach the Gospel to the Infidels there, and Christen their Children. He was accompany'd thither by Mr. Little, One of the Carolina Commissioners, who, to shew his regard for the Church, offer'd to treat Him on the Road with a Fricassee of Rum. They fry'd half a Dozen Rashers of very fat Bacon in a Pint of Rum, both which being disht up together, serv'd the Company at once both for meat and Drink.

Most of the Rum they get in this Country comes from New England, and is so bad and unwholesome, that it is not improperly call'd "Kill-Devil." It is distill'd there from foreign molosses, which, if Skilfully manag'd, yields near Gallon for Gallon. Their molosses comes from the same country, and has the name of "Long Sugar" in Carolina, I suppose from the Ropiness of it, and Serves all the purposes of Sugar, both in their Eating and Drinking.

When they entertain their Friends bountifully, they fail not to set before them a Capacious Bowl of Bombo, so call'd from the Admiral of that name. This is a Compound of Rum and Water in Equal Parts, made palatable with the said long Sugar. As good Humour begins to flow, and the Bowl to Ebb, they take Care to replenish it with Shear Rum, of which there always is a Reserve under the Table. But such Generous doings happen only when that Balsam of life is plenty; for they have often such Melancholy times, that neither Land-graves nor Cassicks can procure one drop for their Wives, when they ly in, or are troubled with the Colick or Vapours. Very few in this Country have the Industry to plant Orchards, which, in a Dearth of Rum, might supply them with much better Liquor.

The Truth is, there is one Inconvenience that easily discourages lazy People

9. **Small Heat at the Hough**—short turn at the hoe. 11. **Solomon's Sluggard**—See Prov. 20:4. 28. **Ropiness**—stringiness. 31. **Bombo**—Admiral John Benbow (1653-1702) seems to have had nothing to do with naming the drink in question. The word is Italian in origin. 37. **Land-graves nor Cassicks**—a hit at the pompous nomenclature in John Locke's "The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina" (1669), intended for the government of the colony. This provided for the creation of one landgrave (count) and two casiques for each county, who were to constitute a hereditary nobility.



from making This improvement: very often, in Autumn, when the Apples begin to ripen, they are visited with Numerous Flights of paraqueets, that bite all the Fruit to Pieces in a moment, for the sake of the Kernels. The Havock they make is Sometimes so great, that whole Orchards are laid waste  
 5 in Spite of all the Noises that can be made, or Mawkins that can be dressed up, to fright 'em away. These Ravenous Birds visit North Carolina only during the warm Season, and so soon as the Cold begins to come on, retire back towards the Sun. They rarely Venture so far North as Virginia, except in a very hot Summer, when they visit the most Southern Parts of it. They are  
 10 very Beautiful; but like some other pretty Creatures, are apt to be loud and mischievous.

[March] 27. Betwixt this and Edenton there are many thuckleberry Slashes, which afford a convenient Harbour for Wolves and Foxes. The first of these wild Beasts is not so large and fierce as they are in other countries more North-  
 15 erly. He will not attack a Man in the Keenest of his Hunger, but run away from him, as from an Animal more mischievous than himself.

The Foxes are much bolder, and will Sometimes not only make a Stand, but likewise assault any one that would balk them of their Prey. The Inhabitants hereabouts take the trouble to dig abundance of Wolf-Pits, so deep  
 20 and perpendicular, that when a Wolf is once tempted into them, he can no more Scramble out again, than a Husband who has taken the Leap can Scramble out of Matrimony.

Most of the Houses in this Part of the Country are Log-houses, covered with Pine or Cypress Shingles, 3 feet long, and one broad. They are hung  
 25 upon Laths with Peggs, and their doors too turn upon Wooden Hinges, and have wooden Locks to Secure them, so that the Building is finisht without Nails or other Iron-Work. They also set up their Pales without any Nails at all, and indeed more Securely than those that are nail'd. There are 3 Rails mortised into the Posts, the lowest of which serves as a Sill with a Groove in  
 30 the Middle, big enough to receive the End of the Pales: the middle Part of the Pale rests against the Inside of the Next Rail, and the Top of it is brought forward to the outside of the uppermost. Such Wreathing of the Pales in and out makes them stand firm, and much harder to unfix than when nail'd in the Ordinary way.

35 Within 3 or 4 Miles of Edenton, the Soil appears to be a little more fertile, tho' it is much cut with Slashes, which seem all to have a tendency towards the Dismal.

This Towne is Situate on the North side of Albemarle Sound, which is there about 5 miles over. A Dirty Slash runs all along the Back of it, which in

2. paraqueets—According to Mark Catesby, who visited this region from 1712 to 1719, flocks of parakeets or "parrots" visited orchards in autumn "where they make great destruction for their kernels only: for the same purpose they frequent Virginia; which is the furthest North I ever hear they have been seen." (*The Natural History of Carolina*, London, 1771, 2 vols., Vol. I, p. 11). 5. Mawkins—scarecrows. 12. thuckleberry—huckleberry. 13. Wolves and Foxes—As showing the accuracy of Byrd's observations, his description of the habits of the wolf is confirmed by Catesby, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. xxvi. 27. Pales—rails for fencing. 35. Edenton—During the administration of Governor Charles Eden (1714-1722) Edenton, formerly known as Queen Anne's Creek, became the seat of government. 36-37. Slashes . . . tendency towards the Dismal—low, wet, overgrown swamps draining into the Dismal Swamp.

the Summer is a foul annoyance, and furnishes abundance of that Carolina plague, musquetas. There may be 40 or 50 Houses, most of them Small, and built without Expense. A Citizen here is counted Extravagant, if he has Ambition enough to aspire to a Brick-chimney. Justice herself is but indifferently Lodged, the Court-House having much the Air of a Common Tobacco-House. I believe this is the only Metropolis in the Christian or Mahometan World, where there is neither Church, Chappel, Mosque, Synagogue, or any other Place of Publick Worship of any Sect or Religion whatsoever.

What little Devotion there may happen to be is much more private than their vices. The People seem easy without a Minister, as long as they are exempted from paying Him. Some times the Society for propagating the Gospel has had the Charity to send over Missionaries to this Country; but unfortunately the Priest has been too Lewd for the people, or, which oftener happens, they too lewd for the Priest. For these Reasons these Reverend Gentlemen have always left their Flocks as arrant Heathen as they found them. Thus much however may be said for the Inhabitants of Edenton, that not a Soul has the least taint of Hypocrisy, or Superstition, acting very Frankly and above-board in all their Excesses.

Provisions here are extremely cheap, and extremely good, so that People may live plentifully at a trifling expense. Nothing is dear but Law, Physick, and Strong Drink, which are all bad in their Kind, and the last they get with so much Difficulty, that they are never guilty of the Sin of Suffering it to Sour upon their Hands. Their Vanity generally lies not so much in having a handsome Dining-Room, as a Handsome House of Office: in this Kind of Structure they are really extravagant.

They are rarely guilty of Flattering or making any Court to their governors, but treat them with all the Excesses of Freedom and Familiarity. They are of Opinion their rulers wou'd be apt to grow insolent, if they grew Rich, and for that reason take care to keep them poorer, and more dependent, if possible, than the Saints in New England used to do their Governors. They have very little coin, so they are forced to carry on their Home-Traffick with Paper-Money. This is the only Cash that will tarry in the Country, and for that rea-

**2. musquetas**—mosquitoes. **8. Place of Publick Worship**—Byrd probably did not visit Edenton. Within a mile of the Edenton courthouse an Anglican chapel had been built in 1703 (Boyd). **10. without a Minister**—Not literally true. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel sent missionaries to North Carolina in 1711, 1712, 1718, and 1723, and "there was generally a missionary" at Edenton (S. A. Ashe, *Narrative History of North Carolina*, C. L. Van Noppen, 1925, 2 vols., Vol. I, p. 197). In 1732, however, there was no minister of the Church of England (the only one established by law) in the entire colony. **13. too Lewd for the people**—Byrd probably gleaned this information from Moseley, the North Carolina commissioner. The two ministers in the province, the Rev. Mr. Bailey and the Rev. Mr. Blacknall, in 1725-1726 took opposite sides in a quarrel between Sir Richard Everard, the new governor, and the assembly led by former Governor George Burrington. Bailey swore on oath, December 3, 1725, that the Everard party used "base & scurrilous language" to him: "such . . . he never heard given to a Clergyman by any Majestrate before," and Moseley took his deposition. Everard wrote the Bishop of London, Jan. 25, 1725/6, that Bailey was an habitual drunkard. Blacknall, however, was charged with marrying a white woman to a mulatto, and was fined therefor. (*The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, Vol. II, pp. 581, 604-05, 672.) **27. Excesses**—Rioting and tumults marked the political quarrels of North Carolina in the first quarter of this century. **30. Saints in New England**—Puritans. **32. Cash that will tarry**—Under the existing theory of political economy gold was drained from the colonies to England.

son the Discount goes on increasing between that and real Money, and will do so to the End of the Chapter.

[March] 28. Our Time passt heavily in our Quarters, where we were quite cloy'd with the Carolina Felicity of having nothing to do. It was really more insupportable than the greatest Fatigue, and made us even envy the Drudgery of our Friends in the Dismal. Besides, tho' the Men we had with us were kept in Exact Discipline, and behav'd without Reproach, yet our Landlord began to be tired of them, fearing they would breed a Famine in his Family.

Indeed, so many keen Stomachs made great Havock amongst the Beef and Bacon, which he had laid in for his Summer Provision, nor cou'd he easily purchase More at that time of the Year, with the Money we paid him, because the People having no certain Market seldom provide any more of these Commodities than will barely supply their own Occasions. Besides the Weather was now grown too warm to lay in a fresh Stock so late in the Spring. These Considerations abated somewhat of that cheerfulness with which he bidd us Welcome in the Beginning, and made him think the time quite as long as we did till the Surveyors return'd.

While we were thus all Hands uneasy, we were comforted with the News that this Afternoon the Line was finisht through the Dismal. The Messenger told us it had been the hard work of three days to measure the Length of only 5 Miles, and mark the Trees as they past along, and by the most exact Survey they found the Breadth of the Dismal in this Place to be completely 15 miles.

How wide it may be in other Parts, we can give no Account, but believe it grows narrower towards the North; possibly towards Albemarle Sound it may be something broader, where so many Rivers issue out of it. All we know for certain is, that from the Place where the Line enter'd the Dismal, to where it came out, we found the Road round that Portion of it which belongs to Virginia to be about 65 Miles. How great the Distance may be from Each of those Points, round that Part that falls within the Bounds of Carolina, we had no certain Information: tho' tis conjectur'd it cannot be so little as 30 Miles. At which rate the whole Circuit must be about an Hundred. What a Mass of Mud and Dirt is treasur'd up within this filthy circumference, and what a Quantity of Water must perpetually drain into it from the rising ground that Surrounds it on every Side?

Without taking the Exact level of the Dismal, we may be sure that it declines towards the Places where the Several Rivers take their Rise, in order to carrying off the constant Supplies of Water. Were it not for such Discharges, the whole Swamp would long Since have been converted into a Lake. On the other Side this Declension must be very gentle, else it would be laid perfectly dry by so many continual drains; Whereas, on the contrary, the Ground seems every where to be thoroughly drencht even in the dryest Season of the Year.

The Surveyors concluded this day's Work with running 25 chains up into the Firm Land, where they waited further Orders from the Commissioners.

7. **Exact Discipline**—*The Secret History* shows this was not the case. 7. **Landlord**—Neither Byrd's original journal nor *The Secret History* says anything of the landlord's impatience. 44. **chains**—A chain is a measure of length, 66 feet.

## [INDIANS]

Having carried the line westward about seventy-five miles, the commission stopped work April 6 (among other reasons because "the Rattle-Snakes began to crawl out of their Winter-Quarters"), and met again on September 19 to resume their labors. They first met a considerable body of Indians in April when the line carried them to the Nottoway tribe. On October 7 they made a plat of the line and pushed forward, with increasing difficulty, into the broken country beyond the Dan. Byrd pauses on Sunday, October 20, to make some general observations on the habits of the Indians, probably collecting his material from the reports of others, and from books.

[October] 20. . . . The Atmosphere was so smoaky all round us, that the Mountains were again grown invisible. This happen'd not from the Hazyness of the Sky, but from the firing of the Woods by the Indians, for we were now near the Route the Northern Savages take when they go out to War against the Cataubas and other Southern Nations.

On their way the Fires they make in their camps are left burning, which, catching the dry Leaves they ly near, soon put the adjacent Woods into a flame.

Some of our men in Search of their Horses discovered one of those Indian camps, where not long before they had been Furring and dressing their Skins.

And now I mention the Northern Indians, it may not be improper to take Notice of their implacable Hatred to those of the South. Their Wars are everlasting, without any Peace, Enmity being the only Inheritance among them that descends from Father to Son, and either Party will march a thousand Miles to take their Revenge upon such Hereditary Enemies.

These long Expeditions are Commonly carry'd on in the following Manner; Some Indian, remarkable for his Prowess, that has rais'd himself to the Reputation of a War-Captain, declares his Intention of paying a Visit to some southern Nation; Hereupon as many of the Young Fellows as have either a Strong Thirst of Blood or Glory, list themselves under his command.

With these Volunteers he goes from One Confederate Town to another, listing all the Rabble he can, til he has gather'd together a competent Number for Mischief.

Their Arms are a Gun and Tomahawk, and all the Provisions they carry from Home is a Pouch of Rockahominy. Thus provided and accoutr'd, they march towards their Enemy's Country, not in a Body, or by a certain Path, but Stragglng in Small Numbers, for the greater convenience of Hunting and passing along undiscover'd.

So soon as they approach the Grounds on which the Enemy is used to hunt, they never kindle any Fire themselves, for fear of being found out by the smoak, nor will they Shoot at any kind of Game, tho' they shou'd be half Famisht, lest they might alarm their Foes, and put them upon their Guard.

5. **Cataubas**—a tribe of Siouan stock once numbering 1,500 warriors, but reduced before 1743 to less than 400 men owing to constant warfare with the Tuscaroras, and to the smallpox. The **Northern Savages** are members of the Five Nations. 22. **listing**—enlisting. 25. **Rockahominy**—hominy, parched corn.

Sometimes indeed, while they are still at some distance, they roast either Venison or Bear, till it is very dry, and then having Strung it on their Belts, wear it round their Middle, eating very Sparingly of it, because they know not when they shall meet with a fresh Supply. But coming nearer, they begin  
 5 to look all round the Hemisphere, to watch if any smoke ascends, and listen continually for the Report of Guns, in order to make some happy Discovery for their own advantage.

It is amazing to see their Sagacity in discerning the Track of a Human Foot, even amongst dry leaves, which to our Shorter Sight is quite undiscoverable.

10 If by one or more of those Signs they be able to find out the Camp of any Southern Indians, they Squat down in some Thicket, and keep themselves hush and Snug till it is dark; Then creeping up Softly, they approach near enough to observe all the Motions of the Enemy. And about two a Clock in the Morning, when they conceive them to be in a Profound Sleep, for they  
 15 never keep Watch and Ward, pour in a Volley upon them, each Singling out his Man. The Moment they have discharg'd their Pieces, they rush in with their Tomahawks, and make sure work of all that are disabled.

Sometimes, when they find the Enemy Asleep around their little Fire, they first Pelt them with little Stones to wake them, and when they get up, fire in  
 20 upon them, being in that posture a better Mark than when prostrate on the Ground.

Those that are kill'd of the Enemy, or disabled, they Scalp, that is, they cut the Skin all around the Head just below the hair, and then clapping their Feet to the poor Mortal's Shoulders, pull the Scalp off clean, and carry it home  
 25 in Triumph, being as proud of those Trophies, as the Jews used to be of the Foreskins of the Philistines.

This way of Scalping was practised by the Ancient Scythians, who us'd these hairy Scalps as Towels at Home, and Trappings for their Horses when they went abroad.

30 They also made Cups of their Enemies' Skulls, in which they drank Prosperity to their country, and Confusion to all their Foes.

The Prisoners they happen to take alive in these expeditions generally pass their time very Scurvily. They put them to all the Tortures that ingenious Malice and cruelty can invent. And (what shews the baseness of the Indian  
 35 Temper in Perfection) they never fail to treat those with the greatest Inhumanity that have distinguish'd themselves most by their Bravery; and, if he be a War-Captain, they do him the Honour to roast him alive, and distribute a Collop to all that had a Share in stealing the Victory.

5. Hemisphere—horizon. 14. they—The second **they** refers to the Southern Indians. 25-26. Jews . . . Philistines—Cf. I Sam. 18:27. 27. Ancient Scythians—The passage on scalping among the Scythians is translated, almost literally, from Herodotus, IV, 64; the passage on drinking-cups is from IV, 65. The comparison of Indians and classic warriors is not uncommon in colonial literature. 38. Victory—"Tho' who can reproach the poor Indians for this when Homer makes his celebrated hero, Achilles, drag the Body of Hector at the Tail of his chariot for having fought gallantly for the defense of his Country. Nor was Alexander the Great with all his Fam'd Generosity, less inhuman to the brave Tyrians 2,000 of whom he ordered to be crucified in cold Blood, for no other fault but for having defended their City most courageously against him, during a Siege of Seven Months. And what was still more brutal, he drag'd alive at the Tail of his Chariot thro' all the Streets for defending the Town with so much Vigour." (Byrd's note.) For the reference to **Hector** see Iliad, XXII; for the **brave Tyrians**, cf. Diodorus Siculus, XVII, 40-47.

They are very cunning in finding out new ways to torment their unhappy Captives, tho', like those of Hell, their usual Method is by Fire. Sometimes they Barbecue them over live-Coals, taking them off every now and then, to prolong their Misery; at other times they will Stick Sharp Pieces of Lightwood all over their Body's, and setting them afire, let them burn down into the Flesh to the very Bone. And when they take a Stout Fellow, that they believe 5 able to endure a great deal, they will tear all the Flesh off his Bones with red hot Pincers.

While these and such like Barbarities are practising, the Victors are so far from being touch'd with Tenderness and Compassion, that they dance and Sing round these wretched Mortals, shewing all the Marks of Pleasure and Jollity. And if such cruelties happen to be executed in their Towns, they employ their Children in tormenting the Prisoners, in order to extinguish in them betimes all Sentiments of Humanity. 10

In the mean time, while these poor Wretches are under the Anguish of all this inhuman Treatment, they disdain so much as to groan, Sigh, or shew the least Sign of Dismay or concern, so much as in their Looks; on the Contrary, they make it a Point of Honour all the time to Soften their Features, and look as pleas'd as if they were in the Actual Enjoyment of Some Delight; and if they never sang before in their Lives, they will be sure to be Melodious 20 on this sad and Dismal Occasion.

So prodigious a Degree of Passive Valour in the Indians is the more to be wonder'd at, because in all Articles of Danger they are apt to behave like Cowards. And what is still more Surprizeing, the very Women discover, on such Occasions, as great Fortitude and Contempt, both of Pain and Death, 25 as the Gallantest of their Men can do.

### [ A BEAR STORY ]

By the first of November the expedition had penetrated into deeply wooded, mountainous country and was approaching Peter's Creek on the borders of Stokes County. The North Carolina commissioners had in the meantime (October 4) refused to continue, arguing that the disputed parts of the boundary had been settled, leaving the Virginia commissioners to carry on. Despite their desire to discover something about the sources of the Shenandoah and James rivers, the Virginians began their homeward journey on October 27. The rest of Byrd's narrative concerns their struggles to get back safely to Virginia.

[November] 3. A North-west Wind having clear'd the Sky, we were now tempted to travel on a Sunday, for the first time, for want of more plentiful Forage, though some of the more Scrupulous amongst us we[re] unwilling to do Evil, that good might come of it, and make our Cattle work a Good part 30 of the Day in order to fill their Bellies at Night. However, the Chaplain put on his casuistical Face, and offer'd to take the sin upon Himself. We therefore

1-2. torment their . . . Captives—There is no evidence that Byrd ever witnessed such a scene. His description is therefore at second hand. 30. Cattle—horses. 31. Chaplain—Rev. Peter Fountain (Fontaine), 1691-1757, rector of Manakintown and Westover parishes, the chaplain of the expedition.

consented to move a Sabbath Day's Journey of 3 or 4 Miles, it appearing to be a Matter of some necessity.

On the way our unmerciful Indian kill'd no less than two Brace of Deer and a large Bear. We only prim'd the Deer, being unwilling to be encumbered  
5 with their whole Carcasses. The rest we consign'd to the Wolves, which in Return seranaded us a great part of the Night. They are very clamerous in their Banquets, which we know is the way some other Brutes have, in the extravagance of their Jollity and Sprightliness, of expressing their thanks to Providence.

10 We came to our Old camp, in Sight of the River Irvin, whose Stream was Swell'd now near four feet with the Rain that fell the Day before. This made it impracticable for us to ford it, nor could we guess when the water would fall enough to let us go over.

This put our Mathematical Professor, who shou'd have set a better Example,  
15 into the Vapours, fearing he shou'd be oblig'd to take up his Winter Quarters in that doleful Wilderness. But the rest were not affected with his want of Faith, but preserv'd a Firmness of Mind Superior to such little Adverse Accidents. They trusted that the same good Providence which had most remarkably prosper'd them hitherto, would continue his goodness and conduct them  
20 safe to the End of their Journey.

However, we found plainly that travelling on the Sunday, contrary to our constant Rule, had not thriven with us in the least. We were not gainers of any distance by it, because the River made us pay two days for Violating one.

Nevertheless, by making this Reflection, I would not be thought so rigid  
25 an observer of the Sabbath as to allow of no Work at all to be done, or Journeys to be taken upon it. I should not care to ly still and be knockt on the head, as the Jews were heretofore by Antiochus, because I believ'd it unlawful to stand upon my Defense on this good day. Nor would I care, like a certain New England Magistrate, to order a Man to the Whipping Post, for daring  
30 to ride for a Midwife on the Lord's Day.

On the contrary, I am for doing all acts of Necessity, Charity, and Self-Preservation, upon a Sunday as well as other days of the Week. But, as I think our present March cou'd not Strictly be justify'd by any of these Rules, it was but just we should suffer a little for it.

35 I never could learn that the Indians set apart any day of the Week or the Year for the Service of God. They pray, as Philosophers eat, only when they have a stomach, without having any set time for it. Indeed these Idle People have very little occasion for a sabbath to refresh themselves after hard Labour,

**3. our unmerciful Indian**—On September 29 the commissioners had hired Bear-skin, a Saponi Indian, to hunt for the expedition. He "Supply'd us plentifully all the way with Meat, Seldom discharging his piece in vain." **10. Old camp**—The Virginians had camped on the banks of the Irvin (Irvine) River on October 18. At that time the river "seem'd to be deep every where except just where we forded." **14. Mathematical Professor**—Alexander Irvine, professor of natural philosophy and mathematics at William and Mary College, whom Byrd had come to dislike. **27. Jews . . . Antiochus**—This seems to be a confused remembrance of passages from Josephus's *Antiquities of the Jews*. Antiochus Epiphanes plundered the city of Jerusalem, but Ptolemy the son of Lagus surprised it (B.C. 324) on the Sabbath day when the Jews would not fight. (Josephus, Bk. XII, Chaps. 1, 5.) **29. New England Magistrate**—See, for a list of similar cases, Alice Morse Earle, *The Sabbath in Puritan New England*, Scribner, 1891, Chap. XVII.

because very few of them ever Labour at all. Like the wild Irish, they would rather want than Work, and are all men of Pleasure to whom every day is a day of rest.

Indeed, in their Hunting, they will take a little Pains, but this being only a Diversion, their spirits are rather rais'd than depress'd by it, and therefore need at most but a Night's Sleep to recruit them. 5

[November] 4. By some Stakes we had driven into the River yesterday, we perceiv'd the Water began to fall, but fell so Slowly that we found we must have patience a day or two longer. And because we were unwilling to ly altogether Idle, we sent back some of the men to bring up the two Horses that tir'd the Saturday before. They were found near the place where we had left them, but seemed too sensible of their Liberty to come to us. They were found Standing indeed, but as Motionless as the Equestrian statue at CHARING-CROSS. 10

We had great reason to apprehend more Rain by the clouds that drove over our Heads. The boldest among us were not without some Pangs of uneasiness at so very Sullen a Prospect. However, God be prais'd! it all blew over in a few Hours. 15

If much Rain had fallen, we resolv'd to make a Raft and bind it together with Grape Vines, to Ferry ourselves and Baggage over the River. Tho', in that Case, we expected the Swiftness of the Stream wou'd have carry'd down our Raft a long way before we cou'd have tugg'd it to the opposite shoar. 20

One of the Young Fellows we had sent to bring up the tired Horses entertained us in the Evening with a remarkable adventure he had met with that day. 25

He had straggled, it seems, from his Company in a mist, and made a cub of a year old betake itself to a Tree. While he was new-priming his piece, with intent to fetch it down, the Old Gentlewoman appeared, and perceiving her Heir apparent in Distress, advanc'd open-mouth'd to his relief.

The man was so intent upon his Game, that she had approacht very near him before he perceived her. But finding his Danger, he faced about upon the Enemy, which immediately rear'd upon her posteriors, & put herself in Battle Array. 30

The Man, admiring at the Bear's assurance, endeavour'd to fire upon Her, but by the Dampness of the Priming, his Gun did not go off. He cockt it a second time, and had the same misfortune. After missing Fire twice, he had the folly to punch the Beast with the muzzle of his Piece; but mother Bruin, being upon her Guard, seized the Weapon with her Paws, and by main strength wrenched it out of the Fellow's Hands. 35

The Man being thus fairly disarm'd, thought himself no longer a Match for the Enemy, and therefore retreated as fast as his Legs could carry him. 40

The brute naturally grew bolder upon the flight of her Adversary, and pursued him with all her heavy speed. For some time it was doubtful whether fear made one run faster, or Fury the other. But after an even course of about

1. *wild Irish*—During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Irish, suffering from a multitude of oppressive laws, were frequently thus misjudged. 13. *Equestrian statue*—statue of Charles I by Hubert Le Sœur, erected at Charing Cross in 1674, the subject of various poetic eulogies.



50 yards, the Man had the Mishap to Stumble over a Stump, and fell down his full Length. He now wou'd have sold his Life a Penny-worth; but the Bear apprehending there might be some Trick in the Fall, instantly halted, and lookt with much attention on her Prostrate Foe.

- 5 In the mean while, the Man had with great presence of Mind resolved to make the Bear believe he was dead, by lying Breathless on the Ground, in Hopes that the Beast would be too generous to kill him over again. To carry on the Farce, he acted the Corpse for some time without daring to raise his head, to see how near the Monster was to him. But in about two Minutes, to  
10 his unspeakable Comfort, he was rais'd from the Dead by the Barking of a Dog, belonging to one of his companions, who came Seasonably to his Rescue, and drove the Bear from pursuing the Man to take care of her Cub, which she fear'd might now fall into a second Distress.

# JONATHAN EDWARDS

1703-1758

## I. A PRECOCIOUS, PIOUS YOUTH (1703-1726)

- 1703 Born at East Windsor, Connecticut, October 5, fifth child and only son of cultured parents, Rev. Timothy and Esther Stoddard Edwards.
- 1709 Wrote a letter refuting materialism, bantering in tone; also wrote on habits of spiders.
- 1716 Entered Yale College after excellent tutoring at home. Read Locke "greedily," and recorded rationalizations on science and on the human mind.
- 1720-1722 After graduation, spent two further years in theological study.
- 1723 Conversion to Calvinistic doctrine of absolute divine sovereignty. Brief pastorate in New York.
- 1724 Elected a tutor at Yale, but resigned after a year because of illness.

## II. THE PURITAN PREACHER (1726-1750)

- 1726 Became assistant to his grandfather, Rev. Solomon Stoddard, at Northampton, Massachusetts.
- 1727 July. Married Sarah Pierrepont of New Haven.
- 1731 *God Glorified in . . . Man's Dependence* published at the request of Boston ministers.
- 1734-1740 Revival of religion spread from Northampton to Connecticut. Whitefield came from England to assist.
- 1741 Preached sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," at Enfield, Massachusetts.
- 1742-1743 Series of sermons, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (published 1746), his chief expression of religious psychology, influential in Scotland.
- 1744-1750 Difficulties with his parish over sacraments and "indecent books," through defection of relatives, brought his dismissal.
- 1750 His *A Farewell Sermon*, warning against Arminianism, delivered July 1.

## III. EXILE AT STOCKBRIDGE (1750-1758)

- 1751 Settled in Stockbridge as missionary among the Indians of western Massachusetts.
- 1752 His daughter Esther married Rev. Aaron Burr, president of College of New Jersey.
- 1754 Publication of *A Careful and Strict Enquiry into the Modern prevailing Notions of that Freedom of the Will which is Supposed to be Essential to Moral Agency . . .*, ranked him as the first American intellect.

1757 Elected Burr's successor as president of Nassau Hall, Princeton.

1758 Died March 22, following inoculation against smallpox.

BIOGRAPHIES: A. V. G. Allen, *Jonathan Edwards*, Houghton Mifflin, 1889; H. B. Parkes, *Jonathan Edwards, the Fiery Puritan*, Minton, Balch, 1930; A. C. McGiffert, Jr., *Jonathan Edwards*, Harper, 1932; Ola E. Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758: A Biography*, Macmillan, 1940; Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, Sloane, 1949.

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With Edwards Puritanism in America came to its fullest expression. According to this religious philosophy God was glorified by man's entire dependence; few were predestined by the grace of God to eternal life. Naturally there was searching of heart on the part of the individual, and on the side of those who led, there developed the idea of a theocracy. When, by the close of the seventeenth century, the dominance of the Mathers declined before the growing prosperity of the colonies, the religious temper of New England seemed inert. But in Edwards the moribund faith became once more vibrant. The traditional themes were reasserted in the Great Awakening of 1740 with the logical vigor and intimate meaning that belonged to Edwards's peculiar genius. This last and greatest of the theocrats was a curious combination of logician and mystic. In his more personal writings, in his feeling for nature, and in many of his sermons is the ardor of the true mystic; in his defense of the hard-pressed dogmas of Calvinism he displays that clear scholastic logic which made him the power he was. He has been spoken of as "a baffled poet and stylist," which should give him claims to literary consideration. He was a great metaphysician and not merely a preacher of hell-fire sermons. He believed that the world exists for the glory of God, and, being a man of convictions, he preached the duty of living sincerely.

## OF BEING

*Of Being*, which illustrates Edwards's metaphysical idealism, was written about 1718-20, when its author was a student in Yale College. It was first correctly printed from Edwards's manuscript by E. C. Smyth in the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, October, 1895, pp. 241-45. This text has been followed here, but Edwards's spelling and punctuation have been modernized, his sentences have been broken up, and a few obviously necessary phrases have been inserted. Most printings of this essay follow an earlier and less authentic version. Though Edwards's

reasoning requires close attention, the student will soon discover that he is seeking to prove that nothing can be said to exist unless it is perceived. To arrive at this conclusion Edwards has first to destroy the notion of the absolute existence of nullity. The parallel with Berkeley has often been remarked upon.

**T**HAT there should absolutely be nothing at all is utterly impossible. The mind can never (let it stretch its conceptions ever so much) bring itself to conceive a state of perfect nothing. It puts the mind into mere convulsion and confusion to endeavor to think of such a state, and it contradicts the very nature of the soul to think that it should be; and it is the greatest contradiction, and the aggregate of all contradictions, to say that there should not be. 'Tis true, we can't so distinctly show the contradiction by words, because we cannot talk about it without speaking horrid nonsense and contradicting ourself[s] at every word, and because "nothing" is that whereby we distinctly show other particular contradictions. But here we are run up to our first principle, and we have no other to explain the nothingness, or not being, of "nothing" by. Indeed, we can mean nothing else by "nothing" but a state of absolute contradiction; and if any man thinks that he can think well enough how there should be nothing, I'll engage that what he means by "nothing" is as much something as any thing that ever he thought of in his life. And I believe that if he know what "nothing" was, it would be intuitively evident to him that it could not be. So that we see it is necessary some being should eternally be; and 'tis a more palpable contradiction still, to say that there must be being somewhere and not elsewhere, for the words "absolute nothing," and "where," contradict each other. And besides, it gives as great a shock to the mind to thin[k] of pure nothing being in any one place, as it does to think of it in all; and it is self-evident that there can be nothing in one place as well as in another; and so, if there can be in one, there can be in all. So that we see this necessary, eternal being must be infinite and omnipresent.

This infinite and omnipresent being cannot be solid. Let us see how contradictory it is to say that an infinite being is solid, for solidity is surely nothing but resistance to other solidities.

Space is this necessary, eternal, infinite, and omnipresent being. We find that we can with ease conceive how all other beings should not be; we can remove them out of our minds, and place some other in the room of them; but space is the very thing that we can never remove, and conceive of its not being. If a man would imagine space anywhere to be divided so as there should be nothing between the divided parts, there remains space between, notwithstanding; and so the man contradicts himself. And it is self-evident, I believe, to every man that space is necessary, eternal, infinite, and omnipresent. But I had as good speak plain. I have already said as much as that space is God; and it is indeed clear to me, that all the space there is, not proper to body—all the space there is without the bounds of the creation—all the space there was before the creation, is God himself; and nobody would in the least stick at it if it were not because of the gross conceptions that we have of space.

A state of absolute nothing is a state of absolute contradiction. Absolute

nothing is the aggregate of all the absurd[?] contradictions in the world—a state wherein there is neither body, nor spirit, nor space, neither empty space nor full space, neither little nor great, narrow nor broad, neither infinitely great space, nor finite space, nor a mathematical point, neither up nor down, 5 neither north nor south (I don't mean as it is with respect to the body of the earth or some other great body, but) no contrary point, nor positions or directions, no such thing as either here or there, this way or that way, or only one way. When we go about to form an idea of perfect nothing, we must shut out all these things; we must shut out of our minds both space that has something in it, and space that has nothing in it; we must not allow ourselves to 10 think of the least part of space (never so small), nor must we suffer our thoughts to take sanctuary in a mathematical point. When we go to expel body out of our thoughts, we must cease not to leave empty space in the room of it; and when we go to expel emptiness from our thoughts, we must 15 not think to squeeze it out by anything close, hard, and solid, but we must think of the same that the sleeping rocks dream of; and not till then, shall we get a complete idea of nothing.

A state of nothing is a state wherein every proposition in Euclid is not true, nor any of those self-evident maxims by which they are demonstrated; and all 20 other eternal truths are neither true nor false.

When we go to enquire whether or no there can be absolutely nothing, we speak nonsense in enquiring. The stating of the question is nonsense because we make a disjunction where there is none. "Either being or absolute nothing" is no disjunction, no more than whether a t[r]iangle is a t[r]iangle or not a 25 t[r]iangle. There is no other way but only for there to be existence; there is no such thing as absolute nothing. There is such a thing as nothing with respect to this ink and paper; there is such a thing as nothing with respect to you and me; there is such a thing as nothing with respect to this globe of earth and with respect to this created universe—there is another way besides 30 these things having existence—but there is no such thing as nothing with respect to entity, or being, absolutely considered. We don't know what we say if we say we think it possible in itself that there should not be entity.

And how doth it grate upon the mind to thin[k] that something should be from all eternity, and nothing all the while be conscious of it! Let us suppose, 35 to illustrate it, that the world had a being from all eternity, and had many great changes and wonderful revolutions, and all the while nothing knew [that] there was no knowledge in the universe of any such thing. How is it possible to bring the mind to imagine [this]? Yea, it is really impossible, [and] it should be, that anything should be, and nothing know it. Then you'll 40 say, if it be so, it is because nothing has any existence anywhere else but in consciousness. No, certainly, nowhere else but either in created or uncreated consciousness. Supposing there were another universe only of bodies, created at a great distance from this, created in excellent order and harmonious motions and a beautiful variety; and [supposing] there was no created intelli- 45 gence in it—nothing but senseless bodies—[and that] nothing but God knew anything of it: I demand in what respect this world has a being, but only in the divine consciousness? Certainly in no respect. There would be figures and

magnitudes and motions and proportions, but where—where else but in the Almighty's knowledge? How is it possible there should [be]? Then you'll say: for the same reason, in a room [so] close shut up that nobody sees nor hears nothing in it, there is nothing any other way than in God's knowledge. I answer: created beings are conscious of the effects of what is in the room, for perhaps there is not one leaf of a tree nor spear of grass, but what has effects all over the universe, and will have, to the end of eternity. But any otherwise there is nothing in a room shut up, but only in God's consciousness. How can anything be there any other way? This will appear to be truly so to anyone that thinks of it with the whole united strength of his mind. Let us suppose, for illustration, this impossibility: that all the spirits in the universe . . . be for a time . . . deprived of their consciousness, and that God's consciousness at the same time . . . intermitted. I say the universe, for that time, would cease to be of itself, and not only as we speak because the Almighty could not attend to uphold the world, but [also] because God knew nothing of it. 'Tis our foolish imagination that will not suffer us to see. We fancy there may be figures and magnitudes, relations and properties, without any one's knowing of it, but it is our imagination hurts us. We don't know what figures and properties are.

Our imagination makes us fancy we see shapes an[d] colors and magnitudes, though nobody is there to behold it. But to help our imagination, let us state the case. Let us suppose the world deprived of every ray of light, so that there should not be the least glimmering of light in the universe. Now all will own that, in such case, the universe would be immediately really deprived of all its colors. One part of the universe is [in that case] no more red or blue or green or yellow or black or white or light or dark or transparent or opaque. There would be no visible distinction between the world, and the rest of the incomprehensible void. Yea, there would be no difference in these respect[s] between the world and the infinite void: that is, any part of that void would really be as light and as dark, as white and as black, as red and [as] green, as blue and as brown, as transparent and as opaque, as any part of the universe; or, as there would be in such case no difference between the world and nothing, in these respects, so there would be no difference between one part of the world and another. All, in these respects, is alike confounded with, and indistinguishable from, infinite emptiness.

At the same time also, let us suppose the universe to be altogether deprived of motion, and all parts of it to be at perfec[t] rest (the same supposition is, indeed, included in this, but we distinguish them for better clearness). Then the universe would not differ from the void in this respect. There will be no more motion in one than the other. Then also solidity would cease, [since] all that we mean, or can be meant, by solidity is resistance. Resistance to touch—the resistance of some parts of space—this is all the knowledge we get of solidity by our senses, and, I am sure, all that we can get any other way. (But solidity shall be shown to be nothing else, more fully hereafter.) But there can be no resistance if there is no motion. One body can[not] resist another when there is perfect rest amongst them. But you'll say, tho' there is not actual resistance, yet there is potential existence; that is, such and such parts of space would

resist upon occasion. But this is all I would have: that there is no solidity now (not but that God would cause there to be [solidity] on occasion). And if there is no solidity, there is no extension, for extension is the extendedness of the solidity; then all figure and magnitude and proportion immediately ceases.

- 5 Put both these suppositions together—that is, deprive the world of light and motion, and the case would stand thus with the world: there would [be] neither white nor black, neither blue nor brown, bright nor shaded, pellucid nor opaque, no noise or sound, neither heat nor cold, neither fluid nor wet nor dry, hard nor soft, nor solidity nor extension, nor figure, nor magnitude,  
10 nor proportion, nor body, nor spirit. What then [is] to become of the universe? Certainly it exists nowhere but in the Divine mind. This will be abundantly clearer to one after having read what I have further to say of solidity, &c.

So that we see that a world without motion can exist nowhere else but in the mind, either infinite or finite.

- 15 *Corollary.* It follows from hence that . . . those beings which have knowledge and consciousness are the only proper and real and substantial beings, inasmuch as the being of other things is only by these. From hence we may see the gross mistake of those who think material things the most substantial beings, and spirits more like a shadow, whereas spirits only are properly sub-  
20 stance.

## SARAH PIERREPONT

Edwards wrote this rhapsody in 1723 about his future wife, who was then thirteen years old. The two were married four years later and lived happily together. The text of this selection is from Dwight's *Life of President Edwards*, which forms Vol. I of the *Works* (1830). The selection is on pp. 114-15.

- T**HEY say there is a young lady in [New Haven] who is beloved of that Great Being, who made and rules the world, and that there are certain seasons in which this Great Being, in some way or other invisible, comes to her and fills her mind with exceeding sweet delight, and that  
25 she hardly cares for anything, except to meditate on him—that she expects after a while to be received up where he is, to be raised up out of the world and caught up into heaven; being assured that he loves her too well to let her remain at a distance from him always. There she is to dwell with him, and to be ravished with his love and delight forever. Therefore, if you present all  
30 the world before her, with the richest of its treasures, she disregards it and cares not for it, and is unmindful of any pain or affliction. She has a strange sweetness in her mind, and singular purity in her affections; is most just and conscientious in all her conduct; and you could not persuade her to do any thing wrong or sinful, if you would give her all the world, lest she should  
35 offend this Great Being. She is of a wonderful sweetness, calmness and universal benevolence of mind; especially after this Great God has manifested himself to her mind. She will sometimes go about from place to place, singing sweetly; and seems to be always full of joy and pleasure; and no one knows for what. She loves to be alone, walking in the fields and groves, and seems  
40 to have some one invisible always conversing with her.

## PERSONAL NARRATIVE

The *Personal Narrative*, written about 1740-1742, and found among Edwards's papers at his death, is one of the classics of religious literature. Its intellectual honesty, simplicity, and mystical insight suggest comparison with the writings of St. Francis of Assisi. The text of this selection is from Dwight's *Life*, pp. 58-62; 64-67; 98-99; 131-36.

I HAD a variety of concerns and exercises about my soul from my childhood; but had two more remarkable seasons of awakening, before I met with that change by which I was brought to those new dispositions, and that new sense of things, that I have since had. The first time was when I was a boy, some years before I went to college, at a time of remarkable awakening in my father's congregation. I was then very much affected for many months, and concerned about the things of religion, and my soul's salvation; and was abundant in duties. I used to pray five times a day in secret, and to spend much time in religious talk with other boys, and used to meet with them to pray together. I experienced I know not what kind of delight in religion. My mind was much engaged in it, and had much self-righteous pleasure; and it was my delight to abound in religious duties. I with some of my school-mates joined together, and built a booth in a swamp, in a very retired spot, for a place of prayer. And besides, I had particular secret places of my own in the woods, where I used to retire by myself; and was from time to time much affected. My affections seemed to be lively and easily moved, and I seemed to be in my element when engaged in religious duties. And I am ready to think, many are deceived with such affections, and such a kind of delight as I then had in religion, and mistake it for grace.

But in process of time, my convictions and affections wore off; and I entirely lost all those affections and delights and left off secret prayer, at least as to any constant performance of it; and returned like a dog to his vomit, and went on in the ways of sin. Indeed I was at times very uneasy, especially towards the latter part of my time at college; when it pleased God, to seize me with the pleurisy; in which he brought me nigh to the grave, and shook me over the pit of hell. And yet, it was not long after my recovery, before I fell again into my old ways of sin. But God would not suffer me to go on with my quietness; I had great and violent inward struggles, till, after many conflicts, with wicked inclinations, repeated resolutions, and bonds that I laid myself under by a kind of vows to God, I was brought wholly to break off all former wicked ways, and all ways of known outward sin; and to apply myself to seek salvation, and practice many religious duties; but without that kind of affection and delight which I had formerly experienced. My concern now wrought more by inward struggles and conflicts, and self-reflections. I made seeking my salvation the main business of my life. But yet, it seems to me, I sought after a miserable manner; which has made me sometimes since to question, whether ever it issued in that which was saving; being ready to doubt, whether such miserable seeking ever succeeded. I was indeed brought



to seek salvation in a manner that I never was before; I felt a spirit to part with all things in the world, for an interest in Christ.—My concern continued and prevailed, with many exercising thoughts and inward struggles; but yet it never seemed to be proper to express that concern by the name of  
5 terror.

From my childhood up, my mind had been full of objections against the doctrine of God's sovereignty, in choosing whom he would to eternal life, and rejecting whom he pleased; leaving them eternally to perish, and be everlastingly tormented in hell. It used to appear like a horrible doctrine to me. But  
10 I remember the time very well, when I seemed to be convinced, and fully satisfied, as to this sovereignty of God, and his justice in thus eternally disposing of men, according to his sovereign pleasure. But never could give an account, how, or by what means, I was thus convinced, not in the least imagining at the time, nor a long time after, that there was any extraordinary influence of God's Spirit in it; but only that now I saw further, and my reason  
15 apprehended the justice and reasonableness of it. However, my mind rested in it; and it put an end to all those cavils and objections. And there has been a wonderful alteration in my mind, with respect to the doctrine of God's sovereignty, from that day to this; so that I scarce ever have found so much  
20 as the rising of an objection against it, in the most absolute sense, in God's shewing mercy to whom he will shew mercy, and hardening whom he will. God's absolute sovereignty and justice, with respect to salvation and damnation, is what my mind seems to rest assured of, as much as of any thing that I see with my eyes; at least it is so at times. But I have often, since that  
25 first conviction, had quite another kind of sense of God's sovereignty than I had then. I have often since had not only a conviction, but a delightful conviction. The doctrine has very often appeared exceeding pleasant, bright, and sweet.

Absolute sovereignty is what I love to ascribe to God. But my first conviction was not so.  
30

The first instance that I remember of that sort of inward, sweet delight in God and divine things that I have lived much in since, was on reading those words, 1 Tim. i: 17. *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever, Amen.* As I read the words,  
35 there came into my soul, and was as it were diffused through it, a sense of the glory of the Divine Being; a new sense, quite different from any thing I ever experienced before. Never any words of scripture seemed to me as these words did. I thought within myself, how excellent a being that was, and how happy I should be, if I might enjoy that God, and be wrapt up in heaven, and be  
40 as it were swallowed up in him forever! I kept saying, and as it were singing over these words of scripture to myself; and went to pray to God that I might enjoy him, and prayed in a manner quite different from what I used to do; with a new sort of affection. But it never came into my thought, that there was any thing spiritual, or of a saving nature in this.

45 From about that time, I began to have a new kind of apprehensions and ideas of Christ, and the work of redemption, and the glorious way of salvation

by him. An inward, sweet sense of these things, at times, came into my heart; and my soul was led away in pleasant views and contemplations of them. And my mind was greatly engaged to spend my time in reading and meditating on Christ, on the beauty and excellency of his person, and the lovely way of salvation by free grace in him. I found no books so delightful to me, as those that treated of these subjects. Those words, Cant. ii: 1, used to be abundantly with me, *I am the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the valleys*. The words seemed to me, sweetly to represent the loveliness and beauty of Jesus Christ. The whole book of Canticles used to be pleasant to me, and I used to be much in reading it, about that time; and found, from time to time, an inward sweetness, that would carry me away, in my contemplations. This I know not how to express otherwise, than by a calm, sweet abstraction of soul from all the concerns of this world; and sometimes a kind of vision, or fixed ideas and imaginations, of being alone in the mountains, or some solitary wilderness, far from all mankind, sweetly conversing with Christ, and wrapt and swallowed up in God. The sense I had of divine things, would often of a sudden kindle up, as it were, a sweet burning in my heart; an ardor of soul, that I know not how to express.

Not long after I began to experience these things, I gave an account to my father of some things that had passed in my mind. I was pretty much affected by the discourse we had together; and when the discourse was ended, I walked abroad alone, in a solitary place in my father's pasture for contemplation. And as I was walking there and looking up on the sky and clouds, there came into my mind so sweet a sense of the glorious *majesty* and *grace* of God, that I know not how to express. I seemed to see them both in a sweet conjunction; majesty and meekness joined together; it was a gentle, and holy majesty; and also a majestic meekness; a high, great, and holy gentleness.

After this my sense of divine things gradually increased, and became more and more lively, and had more of that inward sweetness. The appearance of every thing was altered; there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, or appearance of divine glory, in almost every thing. God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love, seemed to appear in every thing; in the sun, moon, and stars; in the clouds, and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water, and all nature; which used greatly to fix my mind. I often used to sit and view the moon for continuance; and in the day, spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things; in the mean time, singing forth, with a low voice; my contemplations of the Creator and Redeemer. And scarce any thing, among all the works of nature, was so delightful to me as thunder and lightning; formerly, nothing had been so terrible to me. Before, I used to be uncommonly terrified with thunder, and to be struck with terror when I saw a thunder storm rising; but now, on the contrary, it rejoiced me. I felt God, so to speak, at the first appearance of a thunder storm; and used to take the opportunity, at such times, to fix myself in order to view the clouds, and see the lightnings play, and hear the majestic and awful voice of God's thunder, which oftentimes was exceedingly entertaining, leading me to sweet contemplations of my great and glorious

God. While thus engaged, it always seemed natural to me to sing, or chant for my meditations; or, to speak my thoughts in soliloquies with a singing voice.

I felt then great satisfaction, as to my good state; but that did not content me. I had vehement longings of soul after God and Christ, and after more holiness,  
 5 wherewith my heart seemed to be full, and ready to break; which often brought to my mind the words of the Psalmist, Psal. cxix. 28: *My soul breaketh for the longing it hath*. I often felt a mourning and lamenting in my heart, that I had not turned to God sooner, that I might have had more time to grow in grace. My mind was greatly fixed on divine things; almost perpetually in the  
 10 contemplation of them. I spent most of my time in thinking of divine things, year after year; often walking alone in the woods, and solitary places, for meditation, soliloquy, and prayer, and converse with God; and it was always my manner, at such times, to sing forth my contemplations. I was almost constantly in ejaculatory prayer, wherever I was. Prayer seemed to be natural to  
 15 me, as the breath by which the inward burnings of my heart had vent. The delights which I now felt in the things of religion, were of an exceedingly different kind from those before mentioned, that I had when a boy; and what I then had no more notion of, than one born blind has of pleasant and beautiful colors. They were of a more inward, pure, soul-animating and refreshing nature. Those former delights never reached the heart; and did not arise from any  
 20 sight of the divine excellency of the things of God; or any taste of the soul-satisfying and life-giving good there is in them.

My sense of divine things seemed gradually to increase, until I went to preach at New York, which was about a year and a half after they began; and while  
 25 I was there, I felt them, very sensibly, in a higher degree than I had done before. My longings after God and holiness, were much increased. Pure and humble, holy and heavenly Christianity, appeared exceedingly amiable to me. I felt a burning desire to be in every thing a complete Christian; and conform to the blessed image of Christ; and that I might live, in all things, according to the  
 30 pure and blessed rules of the gospel. I had an eager thirsting after progress in these things; which put me upon pursuing and pressing after them. It was my continual strife day and night, and constant inquiry, how I should *be* more holy, and *live* more holily, and more becoming a child of God, and a disciple of Christ. I now sought an increase of grace and holiness, and a holy life, with  
 35 much more earnestness, than ever I sought grace before I had it. I used to be continually examining myself, and studying and contriving for likely ways and means, how I should live holily, with far greater diligence and earnestness, than ever I pursued any thing in my life; but yet with too great a dependence on my own strength; which afterwards proved a great damage to me. My  
 40 experience had not then taught me, as it has done since, my extreme feebleness and impotence, every manner of way; and the bottomless depths of secret corruption and deceit there was in my heart. However, I went on with my eager pursuit after more holiness, and conformity to Christ.

The heaven I desired was a heaven of holiness; to be with God, and to spend  
 45 my eternity in divine love, and holy communion with Christ. My mind was very much taken up with contemplations on heaven, and the enjoyments there;

and living there in perfect holiness, humility and love. And it used at that time to appear a great part of the happiness of heaven, that there the saints could express their love to Christ. It appeared to me a great clog and burden, that what I felt within, I could not express as I desired. The inward ardor of my soul, seemed to be hindered and pent up, and could not freely flame out as it would. I used often to think, how in heaven this principle should freely and fully vent and express itself. Heaven appeared exceedingly delightful, as a world of love; and that all happiness consisted in living in pure, humble, heavenly, divine love.

I remember the thoughts I used then to have of holiness; and said sometimes to myself, "I do certainly know that I love holiness, such as the gospel prescribes." It appeared to me, that there was nothing in it but what was ravishingly lovely; the highest beauty and amiableness—a *divine* beauty; far purer than any thing here upon earth; and that every thing else was like mire and defilement, in comparison of it.

Holiness, as I then wrote down some of my contemplations on it, appeared to me to be of a sweet, pleasant, charming, serene, calm nature; which brought an inexpressible purity, brightness, peacefulness and rapture to the soul. In other words, that it made the soul like a field or garden of God, with all manner of pleasant flowers; all pleasant, delightful, and undisturbed; enjoying a sweet calm, and the gently vivifying beams of the sun. The soul of a true Christian, as I then wrote my meditations, appeared like such a little white flower as we see in the spring of the year; low and humble on the ground, opening its bosom to receive the pleasant beams of the sun's glory; rejoicing as it were in a calm rapture; diffusing around a sweet fragrant; standing peacefully and lovingly, in the midst of other flowers round about; all in like manner opening their bosoms, to drink in the light of the sun. There was no part of creature holiness, that I had so great a sense of its loveliness, as humility, brokenness of heart and poverty of spirit; and there was nothing that I so earnestly longed for. My heart panted after this, to lie low before God, as in the dust; that I might be nothing, and that God might be ALL, that I might become as a little child.

While at New York, I was sometimes much affected with reflections on my past life, considering how late it was before I began to be truly religious; and how wickedly I had lived till then; and once so as to weep abundantly, and for a considerable time together.

On *January 12, 1723*, I made a solemn dedication of myself to God, and wrote it down; giving up myself, and all that I had to God; to be for the future in no respect my own; to act as one that had no right to himself, in any respect. And solemnly vowed to take God for my whole portion and felicity; looking on nothing else as any part of my happiness, nor acting as if it were; and his law for the constant rule of my obedience; engaging to fight with all my might, against the world, the flesh and the devil, to the end of my life. But I have reason to be infinitely humbled, when I consider how much I have failed of answering my obligation.

I had then abundance of sweet religious conversation in the family where I lived, with Mr. John Smith and his pious mother. My heart was knit in affec-

tion to those in whom were appearances of true piety; and I could bear the thoughts of no other companions, but such as were holy, and the disciples of the blessed Jesus. I had great longings for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world; and my secret prayer used to be, in great part, taken up in praying for it. If I heard the least hint of any thing that happened, in any part of the world, that appeared, in some respect or other, to have a favorable aspect on the interest of Christ's kingdom, my soul eagerly caught at it; and it would much animate and refresh me. I used to be eager to read public news letters, mainly for that end; to see if I could not find some news favorable to the interest of religion in the world.

I very frequently used to retire into a solitary place, on the banks of Hudson's river, at some distance from the city, for contemplation on divine things, and secret converse with God; and had many sweet hours there. Sometimes Mr. Smith and I walked there together, to converse on the things of God; and our conversation used to turn much on the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world, and the glorious things that God would accomplish for his church in the latter days. I had then, and at other times the greatest delight in the holy scriptures, of any book whatsoever. Oftentimes in reading it, every word seemed to touch my heart. I felt a harmony between something in my heart, and those sweet and powerful words. I seemed often to see so much light exhibited by every sentence, and such a refreshing food communicated, that I could not get along in reading; often dwelling long on one sentence, to see the wonders contained in it; and yet almost every sentence seemed to be full of wonders.

I came away from New York in the month of April, 1723, and had a most bitter parting with Madam Smith and her son. My heart seemed to sink within me at leaving the family and city, where I had enjoyed so many sweet and pleasant days. I went from New York to Weathersfield, by water, and as I sailed away, I kept sight of the city as long as I could. However, that night, after this sorrowful parting, I was greatly comforted in God at Westchester, where we went ashore to lodge; and had a pleasant time of it all the voyage to Saybrook. It was sweet to me to think of meeting dear Christians in heaven, where we should never part more. At Saybrook we went ashore to lodge, on Saturday, and there kept the Sabbath; where I had a sweet and refreshing season, walking alone in the fields.

After I came home to Windsor, I remained much in a like frame of mind, as when at New York; only sometimes I felt my heart ready to sink with the thoughts of my friends at New York. My support was in contemplations on the heavenly state; as I find in my Diary of May 1, 1723. It was a comfort to think of that state, where there is fulness of joy; where reigns heavenly, calm, and delightful love, without alloy; where there are continually the dearest expressions of this love; where is the enjoyment of the persons loved, without ever parting; where those persons who appear so lovely in this world, will really be inexpressibly more lovely and full of love to us. And how sweetly will the mutual lovers join together to sing the praises of God and the Lamb! How will it fill us with joy to think, that this enjoyment, these sweet exercises will never cease, but will last to all eternity! I continued much in the same

frame, in the general, as when at New York, till I went to New Haven as tutor to the college; particularly once at Bolton, on a journey from Boston, while walking out alone in the fields. After I went to New Haven I sunk in religion; my mind being diverted from my eager pursuits after holiness, by some affairs that greatly perplexed and distracted my thoughts.

In September, 1725, I was taken ill at New Haven, and while endeavoring to go home to Windsor, was so ill at the North Village, that I could go no further; where I lay sick for about a quarter of a year. In this sickness God was pleased to visit me again with the sweet influences of his Spirit. My mind was greatly engaged there in divine, pleasant contemplations, and longings of soul. I observed that those who watched with me, would often be looking out wishfully for the morning; which brought to my mind those words of the Psalmist, and which my soul with delight made its own language, *My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning, I say, more than they that watch for the morning*; and when the light of day came in at the windows, it refreshed my soul from one morning to another. It seemed to be some image of the light of God's glory.

I remember, about that time, I used greatly to long for the conversion of some that I was concerned with; I could gladly honor them, and with delight be a servant to them, and lie at their feet, if they were but truly holy. But, some time after this, I was again greatly diverted in my mind with some temporal concerns that exceedingly took up my thoughts, greatly to the wounding of my soul; and went on through various exercises, that it would be tedious to relate, which gave me much more experience of my own heart, than ever I had before.

Since I came to this town, I have often had sweet complacency in God, in views of his glorious perfections and the excellency of Jesus Christ. God has appeared to me a glorious and lovely being, chiefly on the account of his holiness. The holiness of God has always appeared to me the most lovely of all his attributes. The doctrines of God's absolute sovereignty, and free grace, in shewing mercy to whom he would shew mercy; and man's absolute dependence on the operations of God's Holy Spirit, have very often appeared to me as sweet and glorious doctrines. These doctrines have been much my delight. God's sovereignty has ever appeared to me, great part of his glory. It has often been my delight to approach God, and adore him as a sovereign God, and ask sovereign mercy of him.

I have loved the doctrines of the gospel; they have been to my soul like green pastures. The gospel has seemed to me the richest treasure; the treasure that I have most desired, and longed that it might dwell richly in me. The way of salvation by Christ has appeared, in a general way, glorious and excellent, most pleasant and most beautiful. It has often seemed to me, that it would in a great measure spoil heaven, to receive it in any other way. That text has often been affecting and delightful to me. Isa. xxxii: 2. *A man shall be an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, &c.*

It has often appeared to me delightful, to be united to Christ; to have him for my head, and to be a member of his body; also to have Christ for my

teacher and prophet. I very often think with sweetness, and longings, and pantings of soul, of being a little child, taking hold of Christ, to be led by him through the wilderness of this world. That text, Matth. xviii: 3, has often been sweet to me, *except ye be converted and become as little children*, &c. I  
 5 love to think of coming to Christ, to receive salvation of him, poor in spirit, and quite empty of self, humbly exalting him alone; cut off entirely from my own root, in order to grow into, and out of Christ; to have God in Christ to be all in all; and to live by faith on the Son of God, a life of humble unfeigned confidence in him. That scripture has often been sweet to me, Psal. cxv: 1. *Not*  
 10 *unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake.* And those words of Christ, Luke x: 21. *In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.* That  
 15 sovereignty of God which Christ rejoiced in, seemed to me worthy of such joy; and that rejoicing seemed to show the excellency of Christ, and of what spirit he was.

Sometimes, only mentioning a single word caused my heart to burn within me; or only seeing the name of Christ, or the name of some attribute of God.  
 20 And God has appeared glorious to me, on account of the Trinity. It has made me have exalting thoughts of God, that he subsists in three persons; Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The sweetest joys and delights I have experienced, have not been those that have arisen from a hope of my own good estate; but in a direct view of the glorious things of the gospel. When I enjoy this sweetness,  
 25 it seems to carry me above the thoughts of my own estate; it seems at such times a loss that I cannot bear, to take off my eye from the glorious pleasant object I behold without me, to turn my eye in upon myself, and my own good estate.

My heart has been much on the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the  
 30 world. The histories of the past advancement of Christ's kingdom have been sweet to me. When I have read histories of past ages, the pleasantest thing in all my reading has been, to read of the kingdom of Christ being promoted. And when I have expected, in my reading, to come to any such thing, I have rejoiced in the prospect, all the way as I read. And my mind has been much  
 35 entertained and delighted with the scripture promises and prophecies, which relate to the future glorious advancement of Christ's kingdom upon earth.

I have sometimes had a sense of the excellent fulness of Christ, and his meetness and suitableness as a Saviour; whereby he has appeared to me, far above all, the chief of ten thousands. His blood and atonement have appeared  
 40 sweet, and his righteousness sweet; which was always accompanied with ardency of spirit; and inward strugglings and breathings, and groanings that cannot be uttered, to be emptied of myself, and swallowed up in Christ.

Once as I rode out into the woods for my health, in 1737, having alighted from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly has been, to walk  
 45 for divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God, as Mediator between God and man, and his wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle

condescension. This grace that appeared so calm and sweet, appeared also great above the heavens. The person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception—which continued as near as I can judge, about an hour; which kept me the greater part of the time in a flood of tears, and weeping aloud. I felt an ardency of soul 5 to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, emptied and annihilated; to lie in the dust, and to be full of Christ alone; to love him with a holy and pure love; to trust in him; to live upon him; to serve and follow him; and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure, with a divine and heavenly purity. I have, several other times, had views very much of the same nature, and which have 10 had the same effects.

I have many times had a sense of the glory of the third person in the Trinity, in his office of Sanctifier; in his holy operations, communicating divine light and life to the soul. God, in the communications of his Holy Spirit, has appeared as an infinite fountain of divine glory and sweetness; being full, and 15 sufficient to fill and satisfy the soul; pouring forth itself in sweet communications; like the sun in its glory, sweetly and pleasantly diffusing light and life. And I have sometimes had an affecting sense of the excellency of the word of God, as a word of life; as the light of life; a sweet, excellent, life-giving word; accompanied with a thirsting after that word, that it might dwell richly in 20 my heart.

Often, since I lived in this town, I have had very affecting views of my own sinfulness and vileness; very frequently to such a degree as to hold me in a kind of loud weeping, sometimes for a considerable time together; so that I have often been forced to shut myself up. I have had a vastly greater sense of my 25 own wickedness, and the badness of my own heart, than ever I had before my conversion. It has often appeared to me, that if God should mark iniquity against me, I should appear the very worst of all mankind; of all that have been, since the beginning of the world to this time; and that I should have by far the lowest place in hell. When others, that have come to talk with me 30 about their soul concerns, have expressed the sense they have had of their own wickedness, by saying that it seemed to them, that they were as bad as the devil himself; I thought their expression seemed exceedingly faint and feeble, to represent my wickedness.

My wickedness, as I am in myself, has long appeared to me perfectly ineffable, and swallowing up all thought and imagination; like an infinite deluge, 35 or mountains over my head. I know not how to express better what my sins appear to me to be, than by heaping infinite upon infinite, and multiplying infinite by infinite. Very often, for these many years, these expressions are in my mind, and in my mouth, "Infinite upon infinite—Infinite upon infinite!" 40 When I look into my heart, and take a view of my wickedness, it looks like an abyss infinitely deeper than hell. And it appears to me, that were it not for free grace, exalted and raised up to the infinite height of all the fulness and glory of the great Jehovah, and the arm of his power and grace stretched forth in all the majesty of his power, and in all the glory of his sovereignty, I should appear 45 sunk down in my sins below hell itself; far beyond the sight of every thing, but the eye of sovereign grace, that can pierce even down to such a depth. And



yet, it seems to me, that my conviction of sin is exceedingly small, and faint; it is enough to amaze me, that I have no more sense of my sin. I know certainly, that I have very little sense of my sinfulness. When I have had turns of weeping and crying for my sins, I thought I knew at the time, that my repentance  
 5 was nothing to my sin.

I have greatly longed of late, for a broken heart, and to lie low before God; and, when I ask for humility, I cannot bear the thoughts of being no more humble than other Christians. It seems to me, that though their degrees of humility may be suitable for them, yet it would be a vile self-exaltation to me,  
 10 not to be the lowest in humility of all mankind. Others speak of their longing to be "humbled to the dust;" that may be a proper expression for them, but I always think of myself, that I ought, and it is an expression that has long been natural for me to use in prayer, "to lie infinitely low before God." And it is affecting to think, how ignorant I was, when a young Christian, of the bottom-  
 15 less, infinite depths of wickedness, pride, hypocrisy and deceit, left in my heart.

I have a much greater sense of my universal, exceeding dependence on God's grace and strength, and mere good pleasure, of late, than I used formerly to have; and have experienced more of an abhorrence of my own righteousness. The very thought of any joy arising in me, on any consideration of my own  
 20 amiableness, performances, or experiences, or any goodness of heart or life, is nauseous and detestable to me. And yet I am greatly afflicted with a proud and self-righteous spirit, much more sensibly than I used to be formerly. I see that serpent rising and putting forth its head continually, every where, all around me.

Though it seems to me, that, in some respects, I was a far better Christian, for two or three years after my first conversion, than I am now; and lived in a more constant delight and pleasure; yet, of late years, I have had a more full and constant sense of the absolute sovereignty of God, and a delight in that sovereignty; and have had more of a sense of the glory of Christ, as a Mediator  
 30 revealed in the gospel. On one Saturday night, in particular, I had such a discovery of the excellency of the gospel above all other doctrines, that I could not but say to myself, "This is my chosen light, my chosen doctrine;" and of Christ, "This is my chosen Prophet." It appeared sweet, beyond all expression, to follow Christ, and to be taught, and enlightened, and instructed by him;  
 35 to learn of him, and live to him. Another Saturday night, (*January, 1739*) I had such a sense, how sweet and blessed a thing it was to walk in the way of duty; to do that which was right and meet to be done, and agreeable to the holy mind of God; that it caused me to break forth into a kind of loud weeping, which held me some time, so that I was forced to shut myself up, and  
 40 fasten the doors. I could not but, as it were, cry out, "How happy are they which do that which is right in the sight of God! They are blessed indeed, they are the happy ones!" I had, at the same time, a very affecting sense, how meet and suitable it was that God should govern the world, and order all things according to his own pleasure; and I rejoiced in it, that God reigned, and that  
 45 his will was done.

## CONCERNING THE NOTION OF LIBERTY, AND OF MORAL AGENCY

From *The Freedom of the Will*, Boston, 1754, Part I, Section V.

THE PLAIN and obvious meaning of the words *Freedom* and *Liberty*, in common speech, is *The power, opportunity, or advantage that any one has, to do as he pleases*. Or in other words, his being free from hinderance or impediment in the way of doing, or conducting in any respect, as he wills. And the contrary to Liberty, whatever name we call that by, is a person's being hindered or unable to conduct as he will, or being necessitated to do otherwise. 5

If this which I have mentioned be the meaning of the word Liberty, in the ordinary use of language; as I trust that none that has ever learned to talk, and is unprejudiced, will deny; then it will follow, that in propriety of speech, neither Liberty, nor its contrary, can properly be ascribed to any being or thing, but that which has such a faculty, power, or property, as is called will. For that which is possessed of no *will*, cannot have any *power* or *opportunity* of doing *according to its will*, nor be necessitated to act *contrary to its will*, nor be restrained from acting agreeably to it. And therefore to talk of Liberty, or the contrary, as belonging to the *very will itself*, is not to speak good sense; if we judge of sense, and nonsense, by the original and proper signification of words.—For the *will itself* is not an Agent that *has a will*: the power of choosing, itself, has not a power of choosing. That which has the power of volition is the man, or the soul, and not the power of volition itself. And he that has the Liberty of doing according to his will, is the Agent who is possessed of the will; and not the will which he is possessed of. We say with propriety, that a bird let loose has power and Liberty to fly; but not that the bird's power of flying has a power and Liberty of flying. To be free is the property of an agent, who is possessed of powers and faculties, as much as to be cunning, valiant, bountiful, or zealous. But these qualities are the properties of persons; and not the properties of properties. 10 15 20 25

There are two things contrary to what is called Liberty in common speech. One is *constraint*; otherwise called *force*, *compulsion*, and *coaction*; which is a person's being necessitated to do a thing *contrary* to his will. The other is *restraint*; which is, his being hindered, and not having power to do *according* to his will. But that which has no will cannot be the subject of these things.—I need say the less on this head, Mr. LOCKE having set the same thing forth, with so great clearness, in his *Essay on the Human Understanding*. 30

But one thing more I would observe concerning what is vulgarly called *Liberty*; namely, that power and opportunity for one to do and conduct as he 35

5. he wills—"I say not only doing, but conducting; because a voluntary forbearing to do, sitting still, keeping silence, &c., are instances of persons' conduct, about which Liberty is exercised; though they are not so properly called doing." (Edwards's note) 33. Mr. LOCKE—John Locke (1632-1704), English philosopher, whom Edwards had read at college. *An Essay concerning Humane Understanding* was first published in 1690.

- will, or according to his choice, is all that is meant by it; without taking into the meaning of the word, any thing of the *cause* of that choice; or at all considering how the person came to have such a volition; whether it was caused by some external motive, or internal habitual bias; whether it was determined
- 5 by some internal antecedent volition, or whether it happened without a cause; whether it was necessarily connected with something foregoing, or not connected. Let the person come by his choice any how, yet, if he is able, and there is nothing in the way to hinder his pursuing and executing his will, the man is perfectly free, according to the primary and common notion of freedom.
- 10 What has been said may be sufficient to shew what is meant by *Liberty*, according to the common notions of mankind, and in the usual and primary acceptation of the word: but the word, as used by *Arminians*, *Pelagians* and others, who oppose the *Calvinists*, has an entirely different signification.—These several things belong to their notion of Liberty. 1. That it consists in a *self-*
- 15 *determining power* in the will, of a certain sovereignty the will has over itself, and its own acts, whereby it determines its own volitions; so as not to be dependent in its determinations, on any cause without itself, nor determined by any thing prior to its own acts. 2. *Indifference* belongs to Liberty in their notion of it, or that the mind, previous to the act of volition, be *in equilibrio*. 3. *Con-*
- 20 *tingence* is another thing that belongs and is essential to it; not in the common acceptation of the word, as that has been already explained, but as opposed to all necessity, or any fixed and certain connection with some previous ground or reason of its existence. They suppose the essence of Liberty so much to consist in these things, that unless the will of man be free in this sense, he has
- 25 no real freedom, how much soever he may be at Liberty to act according to his will.

A *moral Agent* is a being that is capable of those actions that have a *moral* quality, and which can properly be denominated good or evil in a moral sense, virtuous or vicious, commendable or faulty. To moral Agency belongs a *moral*

30 *faculty*, or sense of moral good and evil, or of such a thing as desert or worthiness, of praise or blame, reward or punishment; and a capacity which an Agent has of being influenced in his actions by moral inducements or motives, exhibited to the view of understanding and reason, to engage to a conduct agreeable to the moral faculty.

- 35 The sun is very excellent and beneficial in its actions and influence on the earth, in warming and causing it to bring forth its fruits; but it is not a moral Agent: its action, though good, is not virtuous or meritorious. Fire that breaks out in a city, and consumes great part of it, is very mischievous in its operation; but it is not a moral Agent: what it does is not faulty or sinful, or deserving of
- 40 any punishment. The brute creatures are not moral Agents: the actions of some of them are very profitable and pleasant; others are very hurtful: yet seeing they have no moral faculty, or sense of desert, and do not act from choice guided by understanding, or with a capacity of reasoning and reflecting,

12. *Arminians*—Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), a Dutch Protestant theologian, and his followers were a sect that attacked the doctrine of predestination as allowing no personal choice between right and wrong. 12. *Pelagians*—Followers of a fourth-century British monk who denied original sin, and asserted that man's unaided will achieves spiritual good. 19. *in equilibrio*—in a state of balance.

but only from instinct, and are not capable of being influenced by moral inducements, their actions are not properly sinful or virtuous; nor are they properly the subjects of any such moral treatment for what they do, as moral Agents are for their faults or good deeds.

Here it may be noted, that there is a circumstantial difference between the moral Agency of a *ruler* and a *subject*. I call it *circumstantial*, because it lies only in the difference of moral inducements, by which they are capable of being influenced, arising from the difference of *circumstances*. A *ruler* acting in that capacity only, is not capable of being influenced by a moral law, and its sanctions of threatenings and promises, rewards and punishments, as the *subject* is; though both may be influenced by a knowledge of moral good and evil. And therefore the moral Agency of the Supreme Being, who acts only in the capacity of a *ruler* towards his creatures, and never as a *subject*, differs in that respect from the moral Agency of created intelligent beings. God's actions, and particularly those which he exerts as a moral governor, have moral qualifications, and are morally good in the highest degree. They are most perfectly holy and righteous; and we must conceive of Him as influenced in the highest degree, by that which, above all others, is properly a moral inducement; viz. the moral good which He sees in such and such things: and therefore He is, in the most proper sense, a moral Agent, the source of all moral ability and Agency, the fountain and rule of all virtue and moral good; though by reason of his being supreme over all, it is not possible He should be under the influence of law or command, promises or threatenings, rewards or punishments, counsels or warnings. The essential qualities of a moral Agent are in God, in the greatest possible perfection; such as understanding, to perceive the difference between moral good and evil; a capacity of discerning that moral worthiness and demerit, by which some things are praiseworthy, others deserving of blame and punishment; and also a capacity of choice, and choice guided by understanding, and a power of acting according to his choice or pleasure, and being capable of doing those things which are in the highest sense praiseworthy. And herein does very much consist that image of God wherein he made man, (which we read of *Gen. i. 26, 27*, and *chap. ix. 6.*) by which God distinguished man from the beasts, viz. in those faculties and principles of nature, whereby He is capable of moral Agency. Herein very much consists the *natural* image of God; whereas the *spiritual* and *moral* image, wherein man was made at first, consisted in that moral excellency with which he was endowed.

# BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

1706 - 1790

## I. THE APPRENTICE MAKES HIS FORTUNE (1706-1748)

- 1706 Born January 17 in Milk Street, Boston, the tenth son of Josiah Franklin and his eighth child by his second wife, Abiah Folger Franklin.
- 1718 After a desultory schooling, and a brief period in his father's tallow shop, Franklin was apprenticed to his half-brother James, who founded (1721) the *New England Courant*, in which young Benjamin's first periodical contributions, the "Silence Dogood" papers, appeared.
- 1723 Arrived in Philadelphia (October), having quarreled with James. Employment in Keimer's printing shop.
- 1724 Sailed for London at the instigation of Governor William Keith. Stranded there, Franklin worked in various printing shops, and expressed deistic principles in *A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain* (1725).
- 1726 Returned to Philadelphia (October), eventually becoming a printer in partnership (1728-1730) with Hugh Meredith.
- 1727 Founded The Junto.
- 1730 Married Deborah Read; beginning of success of *The Pennsylvania Gazette*.
- 1731 The Philadelphia Library founded through Franklin's efforts.
- 1732-1757 Franklin's connection with *Poor Richard's Almanack*.
- 1736-1751 Clerk of the Pennsylvania Assembly.
- 1743 Instrumental in founding the American Philosophical Society. Increasing interest in scientific theory, invention, and natural phenomena, notably electricity.
- 1748 Firm of Franklin and Hall formed. Franklin's income being now £2,000 a year, he was freed for public and philosophical services.

## II. SCIENTIST AND COLONIAL STATESMAN (1748-1775)

- 1751 Instrumental in founding the Philadelphia Academy (which became the University of Pennsylvania) and the Philadelphia City Hospital.
- 1752 Kite-flying experiment, following on the publication of *Experiments & Observations on Electricity, made at Philadelphia, in America*, London, 1751, and letters setting forth the theory of the experiment (1750-1752).
- 1753 First collegiate honors (M.A., Harvard; M.A., Yale). Others were M.A., William and Mary (1756); LL.D., St. Andrews, 1759; D.C.L., Oxford, 1762.
- 1754 Delegate to the Albany Congress, having been a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly (1751-1764) and deputy postmaster-general for the colonies (1753-1774).
- 1757-1762 Sent to England as agent of the Pennsylvania Assembly, Franklin opposed proprietary government in Pennsylvania; moved in cultivated society; explored Europe; and kept in touch with scientific progress. He wrote much

on colonial and scientific problems. This is the period of the charming *Craven Street Gazette*, and of two important "imperialistic" documents—*Observations on the Increase of Mankind* (1755) and *The Interest of Great Britain Considered* (1760).

- 1762 Brief return to Philadelphia; immediately sent back to England as colony representative.
- 1766 Examined before the House of Commons (February) on the repeal of the Stamp Act; recovered popularity, temporarily lost. Franklin became representative of other colonies—Georgia (1768); New Jersey (1769); Massachusetts (1770)—a kind of ambassador extraordinary.
- 1769 Publication of third version of *Experiments & Observations*; growing scientific fame.
- 1770–1774 Struggle with unfriendly British government agents; quarrel over the "Hutchinson Letters"; much propaganda for the colonies, like "An Edict by the King of Prussia" and "Rules by which a Great Empire may be Reduced to a Small One."
- 1771 Began writing the *Autobiography* at Twyford.
- 1775 Sailed for America March 20, convinced that peace was hopeless.

### III. THE PATRIOT AND SAGE (1775–1790)

- 1775 May 6. Franklin chosen a member of the Second Continental Congress. Member of many important committees, including that on the Declaration of Independence, and the committee in charge of foreign affairs.
- 1776 Sent to France (arrived December 4) as one of three American representatives to work for an alliance. Residence at Passy; beginning of vast enthusiasm in France for Franklin, the modern Socrates. *Œuvres* of Franklin, translated by Dubourg, 1773.
- 1778 After unsuccessful attempts at peace with England, Franklin was instrumental in negotiating the French alliance. End of his undercover activities. Increasing diplomatic responsibility.
- 1779 Publication of *Political, Miscellaneous and Philosophical Pieces by Dr. Franklin*, edited by Benjamin Vaughan.
- 1781 Resigned as American representative (March 12) and was appointed one of the commissioners to negotiate peace with Great Britain (June 8).
- 1783 Signed (September 3) with John Jay and John Adams the Treaty of Paris, whereby Great Britain recognized the independence of the United States.
- 1785 Recalled by Congress to America, arriving in Philadelphia September 14. Made president of the executive council of Pennsylvania.
- 1787 Member of the Constitutional Convention.
- 1790 Died April 17 in Philadelphia.
- 1791 The *Autobiography* first published as *Mémoires* in a French translation appearing in Paris.

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*Works*, ed. by Jared Sparks, rev. ed., Philadelphia, Childs & Peterson, 1840, 10 vols. (unsatisfactory text); *Complete Works*, ed. by John Bigelow, Putnam, 1887-89, 10 vols. (includes text of the *Autobiography* as printed separately by Bigelow in 3 vols. in 1874); *Writings*, ed. by A. H. Smyth, Macmillan, 1905-07, 10 vols. (omits certain pieces); *A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain*, reprinted from the first edition by the Facsimile Text Society, Columbia University Press, 1930; and *Benjamin Franklin's Letters to the Press*, ed. by V. W. Crane, University of North Carolina Press, 1951. Among innumerable selections see F. L. Mott and C. E. Jorgenson, *Benjamin Franklin: Representative Selections* (American Writers Series), American Book Co., 1936.

To represent Franklin in selections is much like representing the Atlantic Ocean by a tumbler of water. He absorbed the entire rationalistic world of the eighteenth century, touching every aspect of its thought; and because the modern sciences and the modern social sciences were still in the stage where new theories could be freshly made, he contributed largely to almost every department of organized thought. He was, as the French and British liberals recognized, a "good European"—a fact which explains the world-wide vogue of the first great influential American. But this "good European" was in the eyes of sophisticated continentals the product of the American wilderness, so that in Franklin one finds a union of extreme sophistication of experience and knowledge with the appeal of simplicity and directness, and even of sentiment. The core of the eighteenth-century world was bourgeois; and Franklin is the first great representative of the American middle class in politics, business ethics, religion, and psychology. As a literary figure he stands foremost among those eighteenth-century writers for whom literature exists only because it is a tool with which to get something done; even Franklin's lighter pieces have, in most cases, a lesson to teach, a purpose to fulfill. At the same time he mastered a style marvelously lucid, flexible, and competent for his purposes; it lacks only poetry and richness to be a great style. The student had best begin with the first part of the *Autobiography* to see Franklin emerge from the chrysalis of pioneer social conditions into the "great world" of the eighteenth century; after that, seiz-

ing upon some one aspect of this many-sided genius, he may follow this thread through the collected works.

## [ THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY ]

The story of the publication of Franklin's *Autobiography* involves a complex biographical and bibliographical problem, the details of which are for the special student. Suffice it to say that the final draft of this famous work, as printed in the standard edition of Franklin, represents four "layers" of composition, only the first of which, dated from Twyford, England, is reprinted here. Franklin made various copies of his manuscript, all of which disappeared for a time; and not until 1868, when John Bigelow published an edition of the *Autobiography* based on a manuscript by Franklin which had turned up in France, was anything like the original text available. Before that time the texts of the *Autobiography* had been English translations of a French translation of the original manuscript, or imperfect versions going back to Temple Franklin's edition, published in 1816. John Bigelow corrected, he said, some twelve hundred errors in the Temple Franklin text of the *Autobiography*, and professed to give a true text.

The manuscript from which Bigelow (and after him, A. H. Smyth) printed the *Autobiography* is now in the Henry E. Huntington Library. Through the courtesy of this institution it has been possible to compare the Bigelow text with the original manuscript; and it appears that, whatever errors Bigelow corrected, he made a great many additional ones himself—misreading words, changing punctuation, and reconstructing Franklin's sentences. Except for Franklin's system of capitalization, which has been modernized, the text of the *Autobiography* as here printed faithfully reproduces pages 1-87 of this original manuscript.

But although the text here reproduced is believed to be faithful to what Franklin first wrote, it is but a transcript of a single manuscript. The late Max Farrand, director of the Huntington Library, set himself the problem of producing a "critical" text of the autobiography. This may be consulted (in modernized English) by reading *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin: A Restoration of a "Fair Copy"* by Max Farrand, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1949; and the four basic texts in parallel columns may be consulted in *Benjamin Franklin's Memoirs, Parallel Text Edition*, ed. Max Farrand, with an introduction by Godfrey Davies, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1949.

Franklin did not give his work a title, though he often refers to it as his "Memoirs." As the address to his "Dear Son" indicates, he intended his manuscript, or at least the first portion of it, for the eyes of his illegitimate son, William Franklin, only. William Franklin served from 1763 to 1776 as royal governor of New Jersey. Father and son took opposite sides during the American Revolution.

TWYFORD, at the Bishop of St. Asaph's, 1771.

Dear Son: I have ever had a pleasure in obtaining any little anecdotes of my ancestors. You may remember the enquiries I made among the remains of my

1. **Twyford**—the country house of Jonathan Shipley (1714-1788), Bishop of St. Asaph, is near Winchester in England. Shipley had been made bishop of St. Asaph in 1769. He was a Whig in politics, a follower of Burke, an ardent champion of the cause of the colonies. Franklin was intimate with the family, including the daughters, to one of whom (Georgiana) he wrote some of his most charming letters.



relations when you were with me in England; and the journey I undertook for that purpose. Now imagining it may be equally agreeable to you to know the circumstances of *my* life, many of which you are yet unacquainted with; and expecting a weeks uninterrupted leisure in my present country retirement,

5 I sit down to write them for you. To which I have besides some other inducements. Having emerg'd from the poverty and obscurity in which I was born and bred, to a state of affluence and some degree of reputation in the world, and having gone so far thro' life with a considerable share of felicity, the conducting means I made use of, which with the blessing of God so well succeeded, my

10 posterity may like to know, as they may find some of them suitable to their own situations, and therefore fit to be imitated. That felicity, when I reflected on it, has induc'd me sometimes to say, that were it offer'd to my choice, I should have no objection to a repetition of the same life from its beginning, only asking the advantages authors have in a second edition to correct some

15 faults of the first. So would I if I might, besides corr[ecting] the faults, change some sinister accidents and events of it for others more favourable, but tho' this were deny'd, I should still accept the offer. However, since such a repetition is not to be expected, the next thing most like living one's life over again, seems to be a *recollection* of that life, and to make that recollection as durable as possible the putting it down in writing. Hereby, too, I shall indulge the inclination

20 so natural in old men, to be talking of themselves and their own past actions, and I shall indulge it, without being troublesome to others, who thro' respect to age, might conceive themselves oblig'd to give me a hearing, since this may be read or not as any one pleases. And lastly (I may as well confess it, since my

25 denial of it will be believ'd by nobody), perhaps I shall a good deal gratify my own *vanity*. Indeed I scarce ever heard or saw the introductory words, *Without vanity I may say*, &c., but some vain thing immediately follow'd. Most people dislike vanity in others in whatever share they have of it themselves, but I give it fair quarter wherever I meet with it, being persuaded that it is often productive

30 of good to the possessor, and to others that are within his sphere of action: And therefore in many cases it would not be quite absurd if a man were to thank God for his vanity among the other comforts of life.—

And now I speak of thanking God, I desire with all humility to acknowledge, that I owe the mention'd happiness of my past life to His kind <sup>divine</sup> providence, which led me to the means I us'd and gave them success. My belief of this, induces me to *hope*, tho' I must not *presume*, that the same goodness will still be exercis'd towards me, in continuing that happiness, or in enabling me to bear a fatal reverse, which I may experience as others have done, the complexion of my future fortune being known to Him only: in whose power it is to bless

40 to us even our afflictions.

**1. when you were with me in England**—In 1757 William Franklin accompanied his father to England, where he studied law, entered into the scientific and social activities of his father, received an M.A. degree from Oxford, and was appointed governor of New Jersey. **1-2. journey . . . for that purpose**—After attending the Cambridge commencement of 1758 Franklin and his son “went from Cambridge through Huntingdonshire into Northumberlandshire” and at Wellingborough found Mary Franklin Fisher, who remembered the migration of some of the Franklins to New England in 1685. See Franklin's letter to his wife in *Writings*, ed. by A. H. Smyth, Vol. III, pp. 451-54. **33. thanking God**—The student should read in connection with this paragraph Franklin's “Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion” (1728) in *Writings*, Vol. II, pp. 91-100.

The notes one of my uncles (who had the same kind of curiosity in collecting family anecdotes) once put into my hands, furnish'd me with several particulars relating to our ancestors. From these notes I learnt that the family had liv'd in the same village, Ecton in Northamptonshire, for 300 years, and how much longer he knew not (perhaps from the time when the name *Frank-* 5 *lin* that before was the name of an order of people, was assum'd by them for a surname, when others took surnames all over the kingdom)[,] on a freehold of about 30 acres, aided by the smith's business, which had continued in the family till his time, the eldest son being always bred to that business[,] a custom which he and my father both followed as to their eldest sons.—When I 10 search'd the registers at Ecton, I found an account of their births, marriages and burials from the year 1555 only, there being no register kept in that parish at any time preceding.—By that register I perceiv'd that I was the youngest son of the youngest son for 5 generations back. My grandfather Thomas, who was born in 1598, lived at Ecton till he grew too old to follow business longer, 15 when he went to live with his son John, a dyer at Banbury in Oxfordshire, with whom my father serv'd an apprenticeship. There my grandfather died and lies buried. We saw his gravestone in 1758. His eldest son Thomas liv'd in the house at Ecton, and left it with the land to his only child, a daughter, who, with her husband, one Fisher, of Wellingborough, sold it to Mr. Isted, now 20 lord of the manor there. My grandfather had 4 sons that grew up, viz Thomas, John, Benjamin and Josiah. I will give you what account I can of them, at this distance from my papers, and if these are not lost in my absence, you will among them find many more particulars. Thomas was bred a smith under his father, but, being ingenious, and encourag'd in learning (as all his brothers 25 likewise were) by an Esquire Palmer, then the principal gentleman in that parish, he qualify'd himself for the business of scrivener, became a considerable man in the county affairs, was a chief mover of all publick spirited undertakings for the county or town of Northampton, and his own village, of which many instances were told us; and he was at Ecton much taken notice of and 30 patroniz'd by the then Lord Halifax. He died in 1702, Jan. 6, old style, just 4 years to a day before I was born. The account we receiv'd of his life and character from some old people at Ecton, I remember struck you as something extraordinary, from its similarity to what you knew of mine. Had he died on the same day, you said, one might have suppos'd a transmigration.—John 35 was bred a dyer, I believe of woollens. Benjamin, was bred a silk dyer, serving an apprenticeship at London. He was an ingenious man, I remember him well, for when I was a boy he came over to my father in Boston, and lived in the house with us some years. He lived to a great age. His grandson Samuel Franklin now lives in Boston. He left behind him two quarto volumes, M.S. 40

1. one of my uncles—His uncle Benjamin Franklin, described a little later, is meant.  
 4. Ecton—Ecton is halfway between Northampton and Wellingborough. It is interesting to note that Sulgrave Manor, the ancestral home of the Washingtons, is some twelve miles from Ecton.  
 6. order of people—A franklin was formerly a lesser landholder not of noble birth. Cf. Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.  
 7. over the kingdom—Franklin inserts in the text the parenthetical phrase, "Here a Note," apparently intending to amplify his discussion of English surnames and their adoption. In so doing he confused his parenthesis marks, which are here regularized.  
 31. old style—January 17 in modern reckoning. By the act of Parliament of 1750 England adopted the "New Style" calendar, the difference beginning in September, 1752.

of his own poetry, consisting of little occasional pieces address'd to his friends and relations, of which the following sent to me, is a specimen. He had form'd a shorthand of his own, which he taught me, but, never practising it, I have now forgot it. I was nam'd after this uncle, there being a particular affection  
 5 between him and my father. He was very pious, a great attender of sermons of the best preachers, which he took down in his shorthand and had with him many volumes of them. He was also much of a politician, too much perhaps for his station. There fell lately into my hands in London a collection he had made of all the principal pamphlets relating to public affairs from 1641 to  
 10 1717. Many of the volumes are wanting, as appears by the numbering, but there still remains 8 vols. folio, and 24 in 4<sup>to</sup> and 8<sup>vo</sup>.—A dealer in old books met with them, and knowing me by my sometimes buying of him, he brought them to me. It seems my uncle must have left them here when he went to America, which was above 50 years since. There are many of his notes in the  
 15 margins.—

This obscure family, of ours was early in the Reformation, and continu'd Protestants thro' the reign of Queen Mary, when they were sometimes in danger of trouble on account of their zeal against popery. They had got an English Bible, and to conceal and secure it, it was fastened open with tapes  
 20 under and within the frame of a joint stool. When my great great grandfather read it [it] to his family, he turn'd up the joint stool upon his knees, turning over the leaves then under the tapes. One of the children stood at the door to give notice if he saw the apparitor coming, who was an officer of the spiritual court. In that case the stool was turn'd down again upon its feet, when the  
 25 Bible remain'd conceal'd under it as before. This anecdote I had from my uncle Benjamin.—The family continu'd all of the Church of England till about the end of Charles the 2<sup>ds</sup> reign, when some of the ministers that had been outed for nonconformity, holding conventicles in Northamptonshire, Benjamin and Josiah adher'd to them, and so continu'd all their lives. The rest  
 30 of the family remain'd with the Episcopal Church.

Josiah, my father, married young, and carried his wife with three children into New England, about 1682. The conventicles having been forbidden by law, and frequently disturbed, induced some considerable men of his acquaintance to remove to that country, and he was prevail'd with to accompany them  
 35 thither, where they expected to enjoy their mode of religion with freedom.—By the same wife he had 4 children more born there, and by a second wife

2. is a specimen—Franklin has a parenthetical note: "Here insert it," which, however, he failed to do. 11. 4<sup>to</sup> and 8<sup>vo</sup>—quarto and octavo. 17. Queen Mary—During the reign of the Catholic Queen Mary, 1553-1558, Protestants were persecuted in England. 19. English Bible—Of course this was not the King James Bible, but some one of the earlier translations, such as Coverdale's. 20. joint stool—stool made by a joiner; footstool. Obviously a stool with sufficient surface area to conceal a large book, laid open. 23-24. spiritual court—ecclesiastical court especially designed to root out heresy. 26. family . . . Church of England—The family continued in the Anglican faith. 28. outed—ousted, ejected from their positions. 28. nonconformity—By the Act of Uniformity of 1662 all ministers in the Established Church were required to use the revised Prayer Book, from which Puritan sentiments had been purged. Those who refused to conform to the order were called the Nonconformists. Ejected with their followers from the State Church, they met their congregations in illegal assemblies known as conventicles. 31. carried—that is, "took" his wife and children. The word is still used in the sense of convey, conduct, or escort in certain parts of the country.

ten more, in all 17, of which I remember 13 sitting at one time at his table, who all grew up to be men and women, and married. I was the youngest son, and the youngest child but two, and was born in Boston, N. England. My mother, the 2<sup>d</sup> wife, was Abiah Folger, daughter of Peter Folger, one of the first settlers of New England, of whom honourable mention is made by Cotton Mather, in his church history of that country, (entitled *Magnalia Christi Americana*) as a *godly, learned Englishman*, if I remember the words rightly. I have heard that he wrote sundry small occasional pieces, but only one of them was printed, which I saw now many years since. It was written in 1675, in the home-spun verse of that time and people, and address'd to those then concern'd in the government there. It was in favour of liberty of conscience, and in behalf of the Baptists, Quakers, and other sectaries, that had been under persecution; ascribing the Indian wars and other distresses, that had befallen the country, to that persecution, as so many judgments of God, to punish so heinous an offense; and exhorting a repeal of those uncharitable laws. The whole appear'd to me as written with a good deal of decent plainness and manly freedom. The six last concluding lines I remember, tho' I have forgotten the two first of the stanza, but the purport of them was that his censures proceeded from good will, and, therefore he would be known as the author,

<sup>*Person very deformedly language*</sup>  
 "Because to be a libeller, (says he)  
 I hate it with my heart;  
 From \* Sherburne town where now I dwell,  
 My name I do put here,  
 Without offense, your real friend,  
 It is Peter Folger."  
20  
  
  
  
  
  
  
25

My elder brothers were all put apprentices to different trades. I was put to the grammar school at eight years of age, my father intending to devote me as the tithe of his sons to the service of the church. My early readiness in learning to read (which must have been very early, as I do not remember when I could not read) and the opinion of all his friends that I should certainly make a good scholar, encourag'd him in this purpose of his. My uncle Benjamin too approv'd of it, and propos'd to give me all his short hand volumes of sermons, I suppose as a stock to set up with, if I would learn his character. I continu'd however at the grammar school not quite one year, tho' in that time I had risen gradually from the middle of the class of that year to be the head of it, and farther was remov'd into the next class above it, in order to go with that into the third at the end of the year. But my father in the mean time, from a view of the expence of a college education which, having so large a family he could not well afford, and the mean living many so educated were afterwards able to obtain—reasons that he gave to his friends in my hearing, altered

\* In the Island of Nantucket. (Franklin's MS note)

5-7. Cotton Mather . . . *Magnalia Christi Americana*—In Cotton Mather's famous *Magnalia*, London, 1702, Bk. VI, p. 54, Franklin read of "an Able Godly *Englishman*, nam'd *Peter Foulger*, who was imploy'd in teaching the Youth in Reading, Writing, and the Principles of Religion, by Catechising." 28. tithe—tenth. In British usage a tenth part of the product of the land was often devoted to the support of the clergy. Cf. Lev. 27: 30-32.

his first intention, took me from the grammar school, and sent me to a school for writing and arithmetic kept by a then famous man, Mr. Geo. Brownell, very successful in his profession generally, and that by mild encouraging methods. Under him I acquired fair writing pretty soon, but I fail'd in the arithmetic, and made no progress in it.—At ten years old, I was taken home to assist my father in his business, which was that of a tallow chandler and sope-boiler. A business he was not bred to, but had assumed on his arrival in New England, and on finding his dying trade would not maintain his family, being in little request. Accordingly, I was employed in cutting wick for the candles, filling the dipping mold and the molds for cast candles, attending the shop, going of errands, etc.—I dislik'd the trade and had a strong inclination for the sea; but my father declar'd against it; however, living near the water, I was much in and about it, learnt early to swim well, and to manage boats, and when in a boat or canoe with other boys, I was commonly allow'd to govern, especially in any case of difficulty; and upon other occasions I was generally a leader among the boys, and sometimes led them into scrapes, of w<sup>ch</sup> I will mention one instance, as it shows an early projecting public spirit, tho' not then justly conducted. There was a salt marsh that bounded part of the mill pond, on the edge of which at highwater, we us'd to stand to fish for min[n]jows. By much 20 trampling, we had made it a mere quagmire. My proposal was to build a wharff there fit for us to stand upon, and I show'd my comrades a large heap of stones which were intended for a new house near the marsh, and which would very well suit our purpose. Accordingly in the evening when the workmen were gone, I assembled a number of my play fellows, and working with 25 them diligently like so many emmets, sometimes two or three to a stone, we brought them all away and built our little wharff.—The next morning the workmen were surpriz'd at missing the stones, which were found in our wharff; enquiry was made after the removers; we were discovered and complain'd of; several of us were corrected by our fathers; and tho' I pleaded the usefulness of the work, mine convinc'd me that nothing was useful which 30 was not honest.

I think you may like to know something of his person and character. He had an excellent constitution of body, was of middle stature, but well set, and very strong. He was ingenious, could draw prettily, was skill'd a little in music, and 35 had a clear pleasing voice, so that when he play'd psalm tunes on his violin and sung withal as he sometimes did in an evening after the business of the day was over, it was extreemly agreeable to hear. He had a mechanical genius too, and on occasion was very handy in the use of other tradesmen's tools. But his great excellence lay in a sound understanding, and solid judgment in prudential 40 matters, both in private and publick affairs. In the latter indeed he was never employed, the numerous family he had to educate and the straitness of his circumstances, keeping him close to his trade, but I remember well his being

2. **Geo. Brownell**—George Brownell taught school in Boston from 1712 to 1734, advertising that he would instruct in "Writing, Cyphering, Dancing, Treble Violin, Flute, Spinnet &c. Also English and French Quilting, Imbroidery, Florishing, Plain Work, Marking in several sorts of Stiches and several other Works." *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, Vol. XXVII, "Transactions, 1927-1930," pp. 131, 139-140. 14. **governe**—manage the ship, steer. 34. **ingenious**—intelligent. 34. **prettily**—neatly.

frequently visited by leading people, who consulted him for his opinion in affairs of the town or of the church he belong'd to and show'd a good deal of respect for his judgment and advice. He was also much consulted by private persons about their affairs when any difficulty occur'd, and frequently chosen an arbitrator between contending parties.—At his table he lik'd to have as often as he could, some sensible friend or neighbour to converse with, and always took care to start some ingenious or useful topic for discourse, which might tend to improve the minds of his children. By this means he turn'd our attention to what was good, just, and prudent in the conduct of life; and little or no notice was ever taken of what related to the victuals on the table, whether it was well or ill drest, in or out of season, of good or bad flavour, preferable or inferior to this or that other thing of the kind; so that I was bro't up in such a perfect inattention to those matters as to be quite indifferent what kind of food was set before me, and so unobservant of it, that to this day, if I am ask'd I can scarce tell a few hours after dinner, what I din'd upon. This has been a convenience to me in travelling, where my companions have been sometimes very unhappy for want of a suitable gratification of their more delicate[,] because better instructed[,] tastes and appetites.

My mother had likewise an excellent constitution. She suckled all her 10 children. I never knew either my father or mother to have any sickness but that of which they dy'd, he at 89, and she at 85 years of age. They lie buried together at Boston, where I some years since placed a marble stone over their grave with this inscription:

JOSIAH FRANKLIN  
And ABIAH his wife  
lie here interred.  
They lived lovingly together in wedlock  
fifty-five years.  
Without an estate or any gainful employment,  
By constant labour and industry,  
with God's blessing.  
They maintained a large family  
comfortably;  
and brought up thirteen children,  
and seven grandchildren  
reputably.  
From this instance, reader,  
Be encouraged to diligence in thy calling,  
And distrust not Providence.  
He was a pious and prudent man,  
She, a discreet and virtuous woman.  
Their youngest son,  
In filial regard to their memory,  
Places this stone.  
J. F. born 1655, died 1744, Ætat 89  
A. F. born 1667, died 1752 — 85.

By my rambling digressions I perceive myself to be grown old. I us'd to write more methodically.—But one does not dress for private company as for a publick ball. 'Tis perhaps only negligence.—

To return. I continu'd thus employ'd in my father's business for two years,  
 5 that is till I was 12 years old; and my brother John, who was bred to that business, having left my father, married and set up for himself at Rhodeisland, there was all appearance that I was destin'd to supply his place, and become a tallow chandler. But my dislike to the trade continuing, my father was under apprehensions that if he did not find one for me more agreeable, I should break  
 10 away and get to sea, as his son Josiah had done to his great vexation. He therefore sometimes took me to walk with him, and see joiners, bricklayers, turners, braziers, etc. at their work, that he might observe my inclination, and endeavour to fix it on some trade or other on land. It has ever since been a pleasure to me to see good workmen handle their tools; and it has been useful to  
 15 me, having learnt so much by it, as to be able to do little jobs myself in my house, when a workman could not readily be got; and to construct little machines for my experiments, while the intention of making the experiment was fresh and warm in my mind. My father at last fix'd upon the cutler's trade, and my uncle Benjamin's son Samuel, who was bred to that business in London[,]  
 20 being about that time establish'd in Boston, I was sent to be with him some time on liking. But his expectations of a fee with me displeasing my father, I was taken home again.

From a child I was fond of reading, and all the little money that came into my hands was ever laid out in books. Pleas'd with the Pilgrim's Progress, my  
 25 first collection was of John Bunyan's works, in separate little volumes. I afterward sold them to enable me to buy R. Burton's Historical Collections; they were small chapmen's books and cheap, 40 or 50. in all.—My father's little library consisted chiefly of books in polemic divinity, most of which I read, and have since often regretted that, at a time when I had such a thirst for knowl-  
 30 edge, more proper books had not fallen in my way, since it was now resolv'd I should not be a clergyman. Plutarch's Lives there was, in which I read abundantly, and I still think that time spent to great advantage. There was also a book of Defoe's, called an Essay on Projects, and another of Dr. Mather's, called Essays to do Good which perhaps gave me a turn of thinking that had  
 35 an influence on some of the principal future events of my life.

This bookish inclination at length determin'd my father to make me a printer, tho' he had already one son (James) of that profession. In 1717 my

21. time—Franklin's manuscript shows that he first wrote *days*; then wrote **time** above *days*, but failed to cancel the first word. 24. Pilgrim's Progress—Bunyan's work was popular in the American colonies, as in England. 26. R. Burton's Historical Collections—Nathaniel Crouch (1632?-1725?), an English hack writer, produced a great number of books of the kind described in the text. See Dictionary of National Biography under "Burton, Robert or Richard." 27. chapmen's—peddlers'. 31. Plutarch's Lives—Franklin presumably read what is known as the Dryden translation of Plutarch's *Lives* in five volumes, originally printed in 1683-86, and often reprinted. This was widely distributed in the colonies. 33. Defoe's . . . an Essay on Projects—This was published by Daniel Defoe in 1697, and reissued in 1702. It suggests a number of ingenious inventions which have since come into commercial usefulness. 34. Essays to do Good—Cotton Mather's *Bonifacius* originally appeared in Boston in 1710. In later editions the title was changed to *Essays to Do Good*. The emphasis of this work is upon practical virtue. For Franklin's opinion of it, see his letter to Samuel Mather from France, May 12, 1784, in *Writings*, Vol. IV, p. 208.

brother James return'd from England with a press and letters to set up his business in Boston. I lik'd it much better than that of my father, but still had a hankering for the sea. To prevent the apprehended effect of such an inclination, my father was impatient to have me bound to my brother. I stood out some time, but at last was persuaded, and signed the indentures, when I was yet but 12 years old.—I was to serve as an apprentice till I was 21 years of age, only I was to be allow'd journeyman's wages during the last year. In a little time I made great proficiency in the business, and became a useful hand to my brother. I now had access to better books. An acquaintance with the apprentices of booksellers, enabled me sometimes to borrow a small one, which I was careful to return soon and clean. Often I sat up in my room reading the greatest part of the night, when the book was borrow'd in the evening and to be return'd early in the morning[,] lest it should be miss'd or wanted. And after some time an ingenious tradesman Mr. Matthew Adams who had a pretty collection of books, and who frequented our printing house, took notice of me, invited me to his library, and very kindly lent me such books as I chose to read. I now took a fancy to poetry, and made some little pieces. My brother, thinking it might turn to account encourag'd me, and put me on composing occasional ballads. One was called the *Lighthouse Tragedy*, and contained an acct of the drowning of Capt. Worthilake, with his two daughters: the other was a sailor song on the taking of *Teach* or Blackbeard the pirate. They were wretched stuff, in the Grub-street ballad stile, and when they were printed he sent me about the town to sell them. The first sold wonderfully, the event being recent, having made a great noise. This flatter'd my vanity. But my father discourag'd me, by ridiculing my performances, and telling me verse-makers were generally beggars; so I escap'd being a poet, most probably a very bad one. But as prose writing has been of great use to me in the course of my life, and was a principal means of my advancement, I shall tell you how in such a situation I acquir'd what little ability I have in that way.

There was another bookish lad in the town, John Collins by name, with whom I was intimately acquainted. We sometimes disputed, and very fond we were of argument, and very desirous of <sup>to put each other</sup> confuting one another. Which disputacious turn, by the way, is apt to become a very bad habit, making people often extremely disagreeable in company, by the contradiction that is necessary to bring it into practice, and thence, besides souring and spoiling the conversation, productive of disgusts and, perhaps enmities where you may have occasion for friendship. I had caught it by reading my father's books of dispute about

1. **letters**—type. 14. **ingenious**—intelligent, as before. 14. **Matthew Adams**—The main source of information about Matthew Adams is Franklin himself. He was a mechanic with a passion for books, and contributed occasionally to the *Courant* and the *Weekly Journal*. 14. **pretty**—considerable. 20. **Worthilake**—George Worthylake was the first keeper of the Boston Light. Rowing to town on November 3, 1718, with his wife and daughter, he and his family were drowned. Justin Winsor, ed., *Memorial History of Boston*, Osgood, 1880-82, 4 vols., Vol. II, p. 274. Franklin's memory that two daughters were drowned seems to be a slip. 21. **Teach**—Edward Teach, known as Blackbeard, was a famous pirate operating off the Virginia and North Carolina coasts. On November 22, 1717, he was killed by Lieutenant Maynard of the British navy after a desperate struggle. The legend is that Maynard returned to port with Blackbeard's head attached to the bowsprit. See *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, Vol. II, pp. 325-26. 25. **generally**—Franklin first wrote *always*, then wrote **generally** above it, but forgot to cross out *always*. 30. **John Collins**—Franklin seems to be our sole source of information about John Collins.



religion. Persons of good sense, I have since observ'd, seldom fall into it, except lawyers, university men, and men of all sorts that have been bred at Edinburgh. A question was once, some how or other, started between Collins and me, of the propriety of educating the female sex in learning, and their  
 5 abilities for study. He was of opinion that it was improper, and that they were naturally unequal to it. I took the contrary side, perhaps a little for dispute[']s] sake. He was naturally more eloquent, had a ready plenty of words, and sometimes as I thought bore me down more by his fluency than by the strength of his reasons. As we parted without settling the point, and were not to see one  
 10 another again for some time, I sat down to put my arguments in writing, which I copied fair and sent to him. He answer'd, and I reply'd. Three of four letters of a side had pass'd, when my father happen'd to find my papers and read them. Without ent'ring into the discussion, he took occasion to talk to me about the manner of my writing, observ'd that, tho' I had the advantage of  
 15 my antagonist in correct spelling and pointing (which I ow'd to the printing house) I fell far short in elegance of expression, in method and in perspicuity, of which he convinc'd me by several instances. I saw the justice of his remarks, and thence grew more attentive to the *manner* in writing, and determin'd to endeavour at improvement.—

20 About this time I met with an odd volume of the Spectator. It was the third. I had never before seen any of them. I bought it, read it over and over, and was much delighted with it. I thought the writing excellent, and wish'd if possible to imitate it. With that view, I took some of the papers, and, making short hints of the sentiment in each sentence, laid them by a few days, and then, with-  
 25 out looking at the book, try'd to compleat the papers again, by expressing each hinted sentiment at length, and as fully as it had been express'd before, in any suitable words, that should come to hand.

Then I compared my Spectator with the original, discover'd some of my faults, and corrected them. But I found I wanted a stock of words or a readiness  
 30 in recollecting and using them, which I thought I should have acquir'd before that time, if I had gone on making verses, since the continual occasion for words of the same import but of different length, to suit the measure, or of different sound for the rhyme, would have laid me under a constant necessity of searching for variety, and also have tended to fix that variety in my mind, and make  
 35 me master of it. Therefore I took some of the tales and turn'd them into verse: And after a time, when I had pretty well forgotten the prose, turn'd them back again. I also sometimes jumbled my collections of hints into confusion, and after some weeks, endeavour'd to reduce them into the best order, before I began to form the full sentences and compleat the paper. This was to teach me  
 40 method in the arrangement of thoughts. By comparing my work afterwards with the original, I discover'd many faults and amended them; but I sometimes had the pleasure of fancying that in certain particulars of small import, I had been lucky enough to improve the method or the language and this encourag'd me to think I might possibly in time come to be a tolerable English writer,  
 45 of which I was extreamly ambitious.

15. **pointing**—punctuating. The student should note that Franklin's punctuation in the *Autobiography* is rhetorical, not logical. 20. **Spectator**—The famous periodical chiefly written by Addison and Steele, published 1711-12, and immensely popular in various editions throughout the American colonies. 32. **measure**—meter.

My time for these exercises and for reading was at night, after work or before it began in the morning; or on Sundays, when I contrived to be in the printing house alone, evading as much as I could the common attendance on publick worship, which my father used to exact of me when I was under his care: And which indeed I still thought a duty, tho' I could not, as it seemed to me, afford the time to practise it. 5

When about 16 years of age I happen'd to meet with a book, written by one Tryon, recommending a vegetable diet. I determin'd to go into it. My brother, being yet unmarried, did not keep house, but boarded himself and his apprentices in another family. My refusing to eat flesh occasioned an inconvenience, and I was frequently chid for my singularity. I made myself acquainted with Tryon's manner of preparing some of his dishes, such as boiling potatoes or rice, making hasty pudding, and a few others, and then propos'd to my brother, that if he would give me weekly half the money he paid for my board I would board myself. He instantly agreed to it, and I presently found that I could save half what he paid me. This was an additional fund for buying books. But I had another advantage in it. My brother and the rest going from the printing house to their meals, I remain'd there alone, and dispatching presently my light repast, (which often was no more than a bisket or a slice of bread, a handful of raisins or a tart from the pastry cook's, and a glass of water), had the rest of the time till their return, for study, in which I made the greater progress from that greater clearness of head and quicker apprehension which usually attend temperance in eating and drinking. And now it was that being on some occasion made ashamed of my ignorance in figures, which I had twice failed in learning when at school, I took Cocker's book of Arithmetick, and went thro' the whole by myself with great ease. I also read Seller's and Sturmy's books of navigation, and became acquainted with the little geometry they contain, but never proceeded far in that science. And I read about this time Locke on Human Understanding, and the Art of Thinking, by Mess<sup>rs</sup> du Port Royal. 25 30

While I was intent on improving my language, I met with an English grammar (I think it was Greenwood's), at the end of which there were two little sketches of the arts of rhetoric and logic, the latter finishing with a speci-

8. Tryon—Thomas Tryon (1634-1708) wrote some sixteen books and pamphlets of a mystical turn of thinking. Franklin has reference either to *Health's Grand Preservative*, 1684, retitled and republished as *The Way to Health*, 1691, and reprinted, or to *Wisdom's Dictates . . . to Which Is Added a Bill of Fare of Seventy-five Noble Dishes, of Excellent Food*, 1691, or (more probably) to both. Some excerpts from Tryon may be readily found in Fay, *Franklin*, pp. 30-33. It should be noted that English **hasty pudding** (line 13) differs from the American dish of the same name, the latter using cornmeal. 25. Cocker's—Edward Cocker (1631-1675) was the author or compiler of a great many useful manuals of penmanship, arithmetic, and similar subjects. His *Arithmetick*, first published in 1678, is said to have gone through 112 editions. 27. Seller's—John Seller, hydrographer to the king, the dates of whose life and death are not known, published in 1671 *The English Pilot*, often reprinted, but Franklin probably has reference to his *Practical Navigation*, London, 1718, which contains "many useful Geometrical Definitions and Problems." 27. Sturmy's—This is Samuel Sturmy's *The Mariner's Magazine, stor'd with these Mathematical Arts, Navigation and Geometry, Mathematical Instruments, Doctrine of Triangles, Art of Navigation*, etc., first published in London in 1669. There was a third edition in 1684. 29. Locke—See note, p. 55. 29-30. Art of Thinking—*L'art de penser* (1662), a treatise on logic by followers of Descartes, and associated with the abbey of Port Royal, the intellectual capital of a movement in French thought known as Jansenism. 32. Greenwood's—This is James Greenwood's *An Essay towards a Practical English Grammar*, first published in London in 1711, and often reprinted. Throughout the eighteenth century grammatical theory was closely associated with logic.

men of a dispute in the Socratic method. And soon after I procur'd Xenophon's Memorable Things of Socrates, wherein there are many instances of the same method. I was charm'd with it, adopted it, dropt my abrupt contradiction and positive argumentation, and put on the humble enquirer and doubter. And being then, from reading Shaftsbury and Collins, become a real doubter in many points of our religious doctrine, I found this method safest for myself and very embarrassing to those against whom I us'd it; therefore I took a delight in it, practis'd it continually, and grew very artful and expert in drawing people even of superior knowledge into concessions the consequences of which they did not foresee, entangling them in difficulties out of which they could not extricate themselves, and so obtaining victories that neither myself nor my cause always deserved.—I continu'd this method some few years, but gradually left it, retaining only the habit of expressing myself in terms of modest diffidence, never using when I advanced any thing that may possibly be disputed, the words *certainly*, *undoubtedly*, or any others that give the air of positiveness to an opinion; but rather say, I conceive, or I apprehend a thing to be so or so, it appears to me, or I should think it so or so for such and such reasons, or I imagine it to be so, or it is so if I am not mistaken. This habit I believe has been of great advantage to me, when I have had occasion to inculcate my opinions and persuade men into measures that I have been from time to time engag'd in promoting. And as the chief ends of conversation are to *inform*, or to be *informed*, to *please* or to *persuade*, I wish wellmeaning sensible men would not lessen their power of doing good by a positive assuming manner that seldom fails to disgust, tends to create opposition, and to defeat every one of those purposes for which speech was given to us, to wit, giving or receiving information, or pleasure. For if you would *inform*, a positive dogmatical manner in advancing your sentiments, may provoke contradiction and prevent a candid attention. If you wish information and improvement from the knowledge of others, and yet at the same time express yourself as firmly fix'd in your present opinions, modest sensible men, who do not love disputation, will probably leave you undisturbed in the possession of your error; and by such a manner, you can seldom hope to recommend yourself in *pleasing* your hearers, or to persuade those whose concurrence you desire.—Pope says, judiciously,

*Men should be taught as if you taught them not,  
And things unknown propos'd as things forgot,—*

farther recommending it to us,

**1-2. Xenophon's Memorable Things of Socrates**—As the title remained in Franklin's mind for forty years, he apparently read a translation of Xenophon's *Memorabilia* which appeared as *Memorable Things of Socrates*, by E. Bysshe, in 1712. **5. Shaftsbury**—Anthony Ashley Cooper, third earl of Shaftsbury (1671-1713), author of a number of influential essays and books, of which the most important is *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions and Times*, first edition, 1711; second edition, 1714, a kind of "complete works" of the author. **5. Collins**—Anthony Collins (1676-1729), author of various pamphlets and books, of which the *Discourse of Freethinking*, London, 1713, is the best known. **35. Men should be taught**—Quoted from memory from Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, II, lines 574-75, which read:

"Men must be taught as if you taught them not,  
And things unknown propos'd as things forgot."

*To speak tho' sure, with seeming diffidence.*

And he might have coupled with this line that which he has coupled with another, I think less properly,

*For want of modesty is want of sense.*

If you ask why *less properly*, I must repeat the lines,

5

"Immodest words admit of *no* defense,  
*For want of modesty is want of sense.*"

Now, is not *want of sense* (where a man is so unfortunate as to want it) some apology for his *want of modesty*? and would not the lines stand more justly thus?

10

Immodest words admit *but this* defense,  
That want of modesty is want of sense.

This however I should submit to better judgments.—

My brother had, in 1720 or 21, begun to print a newspaper. It was the second that appear'd in America, and was called *The New England Courant*. The only one before it, was *the Boston News-Letter*. I remember his being dissuaded by some of his friends from the undertaking, as not likely to succeed, one newspaper being in their judgment enough for America. At this time 1771 there are not less than five and twenty.—He went on however with the undertaking, and after having work'd in composing the types and printing off the sheets, I was employ'd to carry the papers thro' the streets to the customers.—He had some ingenious men among his friends who amus'd themselves by writing little pieces for this paper, which gain'd it credit, and made it more in demand; and these gentlemen often visited us.—Hearing their conversations, and their accounts of the <sup>approval</sup> approbation their papers were receiv'd with, I was excited to try my hand among them. But being still a boy, and suspecting that my brother would object to printing any thing of mine in his paper if he knew it to be mine, I contriv'd to disguise my hand, and writing an anonymous paper, I put it in at night under the door of the printing house. It was found in the morning and communicated to his writing friends when they call'd in as usual. They read it, commented on it in my hearing, and I had the exquisite pleasure, of finding it met with their approbation, and that in their different guesses at the author none were named but

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1. **To speak tho' sure**—Line 567 of the *Essay on Criticism* reads:

"And speak, tho' sure, with seeming diffidence."

7. **For want of modesty**—Franklin's memory has curiously betrayed him. The couplet he is discussing is not by Pope at all, but is found in the *Essay on Translated Verse* by the Earl of Roscommon, and runs:

"Immodest words admit of no defence,  
For want of decency is want of sense."

15. **New England Courant**—The *New England Courant* began publication Aug. 7, 1721, and was preceded in point of time by *Publick Occurrences* (Boston), Sept. 25, 1690 (only one issue); the *Boston News-Letter*, founded April 24, 1704, the *Boston Gazette*, founded Dec. 21, 1719, and the *American Weekly Mercury* (Philadelphia), founded Dec. 22, 1718. 19. **five and twenty**—According to W. A. Dill, *The First Century of American Newspapers*, University of Kansas, 1925, in 1770 there were 29 newspapers in the future United States.

men of some character among us for learning and ingenuity.—I suppose now that I was rather lucky in my judges: And that perhaps they were not really so very good ones as I then esteem'd them.

Encourag'd however by this, I wrote and convey'd in the same way to the  
 5 press several more papers, which were equally approv'd, and I kept my secret till my small fund of sense for such performances was pretty well exhausted, and then I discovered it; when I began to be considered a little more by my brother's acquaintance, and in a manner that did not quite please him, as he thought, probably with reason, that it tended to make me too vain. And, per-  
 10 haps, this might be one occasion of the differences that we began to have about this time. Tho' a brother, he considered himself as my master, and me as his apprentice; and accordingly expected the same services from me as he would from another; while I thought he demean'd me too much in some he requir'd of me, who from a brother expected more indulgence. Our disputes were  
 15 often brought before our father, and I fancy I was either generally in the right, or else a better pleader, because the judgment was generally in my favour. But my brother was passionate and had often beaten me, which I took extremely amiss; and, thinking my apprenticeship very tedious, I was continually wishing for some opportunity of shortening it, which at length offered in a  
 20 manner unexpected.\*

One of the pieces in our newspaper, on some political point, which I have now forgotten, gave offense to the Assembly. He was taken up, censur'd, and imprison'd for a month, by the speaker's warrant, I suppose because he would not discover his author. I too was taken up and examin'd before the council;  
 25 but tho' I did not give them any satisfaction, they contented themselves with admonishing me, and dismiss'd me; considering me perhaps as an apprentice, who was bound to keep his master's secrets. During my brother's confinement, which I resented a good deal, notwithstanding our private differences, I had the management of the paper, and I made bold to give our rulers some rubs  
 30 in it, which my brother took very kindly, while others began to consider me in an unfavourable light, as a young genius that had a turn for libelling and satyr. My brother's discharge was accompany'd with an order of the House, (a very odd one), that *James Franklin should no longer print the paper called the New England Courant*. There was a consultation held in our printing  
 35 house among his friends, what he should do in this case. Some propos'd to

\* I fancy his harsh and tyrannical treatment of me, might be a means of impressing me with that aversion to arbitrary power that has stuck to me thro' my whole life.—(Franklin's note)

5. **several more papers**—These are the "Dogood Papers," for which see Franklin's *Writings*, Vol. II, pp. 2-49. 7. **discovered**—disclosed. 10. **began to have**—Franklin first wrote *frequently had*, then wrote **began to have** over this, and failed to cross out *frequently had*. 21. **political point**—In the issue of his newspaper for June 11, 1722, James Franklin insinuated that the government was negligent in suppressing piracy. The next day he was examined by the General Court, and imprisoned until the end of the session, July 7. See *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, Vol. IX, pp. 451 ff. 33. **James Franklin**—Franklin's memory is unconsciously telescoping two events separate in point of time. After James Franklin was released in July, he continued to edit and print the *Courant*. On Jan. 14, 1723, he published an article on hypocrites, with other material so displeasing to the authorities that a warrant for his arrest was issued (on Jan. 28), the General Court having previously voted that James Franklin be forbidden to publish the paper further "except it be first supervised by the Secretary of this Province." Benjamin Franklin first appears as the "present publisher" with the issue of Feb. 11, 1723. See *Writings*, Vol. II, pp. 49-52. This episode was the last attempt to establish government press censorship in colonial Massachusetts.

evade the order by changing the name of the paper; but my brother seeing inconveniences in that, it was finally concluded on as a better way, to let it be printed for the future under the name of *Benjamin Franklin*. And to avoid the censure of the Assembly that might fall on him, as still printing it by his apprenticeship, the contrivance was, that my old indenture should be return'd to me, with a full discharge on the back of it, to be shown on occasion; but to secure to him the benefit of my service I was to sign new indentures for the remainder of the term, w<sup>ch</sup> were to be kept private. A very flimsy scheme it was, but however it was immediately executed, and the paper went on accordingly under my name for several months.—At length a fresh difference arising between my brother and me, I took upon me to assert my freedom, presuming that he would not venture to produce the new indentures. It was not fair in me to take this advantage, and this I therefore reckon one of the first errata of my life: But the unfairness of it weighed little with me, when under the impressions of resentment, for the blows his passion too often urg'd him to bestow upon me. Tho' he was otherwise not an ill-natur'd man: Perhaps I was too saucy and provoking.

When he found I would leave him, he took care to prevent my getting employment in any other printing house of the town, by going round and speaking to every master, who accordingly refus'd to give me work. I then thought of going to New York as the nearest place where there was a printer: and I was rather inclin'd to leave Boston when I reflected that I had already made myself a little obnoxious to the governing party; and from the arbitrary proceedings of the Assembly in my brother's case it was likely I might if I stay'd soon bring myself into scrapes; and farther that my indiscrete disputations about religion began to make me pointed at with horror by good people, as an infidel or atheist. I determin'd on the point: but my father now siding with my brother, I was sensible that if I attempted to go openly, means would be used to prevent me. My friend Collins therefore undertook to manage a little for me. He agreed with the captain of a New York sloop for my passage, under the notion of my being a young acquaintance of his that had got a naughty girl with child, whose friends would compel me to marry her, and therefore I could not appear or come away publickly. So I sold some of my books to raise a little money, was taken on board privately, and as we had a fair wind[,] in three days I found myself in New York near 300 miles from home, a boy of but 17, without the least recommendation to or knowledge of any person in the place, and with very little money in my pocket.

My inclinations for the sea, were by this time worne out, or I might now have gratify'd them. But having a trade, and supposing myself a pretty good workman, I offer'd my service to the printer in the place, old Mr. W<sup>m</sup> Bradford, who had been the first printer in Pensilvania, but remov'd from thence

**10. several months**—that is, until Benjamin Franklin ran off. In the issue of the *Courant* for Sept. 30, 1723, James Franklin advertises for a "likely lad" for apprentice—a fact which suggests that Benjamin left before this date. **40. W<sup>m</sup> Bradford**—William Bradford (1663-1752) began printing in Philadelphia in 1685, and immediately got into difficulties with the Quaker government. In 1692, having espoused the cause of George Keith, an Anglican divine who had drifted into hostilities with the reigning Quaker group in Pennsylvania, he was imprisoned, and his property was seized. A jury refused to convict, and in 1693, on the invitation of New York officials, he removed to that province, where, on Nov. 8, 1725, he founded the first newspaper in New York. Franklin incloses the passage about Bradford in brackets.

upon the quarrel of George Keith. He could give me no employment, having little to do, and help enough already: But, says he, my son at Philadelphia has lately lost his principal hand, Aquila Rose, by death. If you go thither I believe he may employ you. Philadelphia was 100 miles further. I set out, however, in  
 5 a boat for Amboy, leaving my chest and things to follow me round by sea. In crossing the bay we met with a squall that tore our rotten sails to pieces, prevented our getting into the Kill; and drove us upon Long Island. In our way, a drunken Dutchman, who was a passenger too, fell overboard; when he was sinking I reach'd thro' the water to his shock pate and drew him up,  
 10 so that we got him in again. His ducking sober'd him a little, and he went to sleep, taking first out of his pocket a book, which he desir'd I would dry for him. It prov'd to be my old favourite author Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* in Dutch, finely printed on good paper with copper cuts, a dress better than I had ever seen it wear in its own language. I have since found that it has been  
 15 translated into most of the languages of Europe, and suppose it has been more generally read than any other book except perhaps the Bible. Honest John was the first that I know of who mix'd narration and dialogue, a method of writing very engaging to the reader, who in the most interesting parts finds himself, as it were brought into the company, and present at the discourse. De foe  
 20 in his *Cruso*, his *Moll Flanders*, *Religious Courtship*, *Family Instructor*, and other pieces, has imitated it with success. And Richardson has done the same in his *Pamela*, etc.—

When we drew near the island we found it was at a place where there could be no landing, there being a great surff on the stony beach. So we dropt  
 25 anchor and swung round towards the shore. Some people came down to the water edge and hallow'd to us, as we did to them. But the wind was so high and the surff so loud, that we could not hear so as to understand each other. There were canoes on the shore, and we made signs and hallow'd that they should fetch us, but they either did not understand us, or thought it im-  
 30 practicable. So they went away, and night coming on, we had no remedy but to wait till the wind should abate, and, in the mean time the boatman and I concluded to sleep, if we could and so crouded into the scuttle with the Dutchman who was still wet, and the spray beating over the head of our boat leak'd thro' to us, so that we were soon almost as wet as he. In this manner we lay  
 35 all night with very little rest. But the wind abating the next day, we made a shift to reach Amboy before night, having been 30 hours on the water without victuals, or any drink but a bottle of filthy rum: The water we sail'd on being salt.

In the evening I found myself very feverish, and went in to bed. But having  
 40 read somewhere that cold water drank plentifully was good for a fever, I follow'd the prescription, sweat plentifully most of the night, my fever left me,

2. **my son**—Andrew Bradford (1686-1742), later Franklin's principal competitor in Philadelphia as a printer. 3. **Aquila Rose**—(1695-1723), a mediocre poet, whose *Poems on Several Occasions*, published by his son in 1740, are his only claim to renown. 5. **Amboy**—Perth Amboy, on Raritan Bay, and one of the two capitals of New Jersey. 7. **Kill**—Kill van Kull, the channel between Staten Island and the New Jersey shore. 19. **De foe**—Defoe's *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, of York, Mariner (part i) appeared in 1719; his *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders*, in 1722; *Religious Courtship*, in 1722; *A New Family Instructor*, in 1727. 21. **Richardson**—Samuel Richardson (1689-1761) published *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* in 1740-42.

and in the morning crossing the ferry, I proceeded on my journey, on foot, having 50 miles to Burlington, where I was told I should find boats that would carry me the rest of the way to Philadelphia.

It rain'd very hard all the day, I was thoroughly soak'd, and by noon a good deal tir'd, so I stopt at a poor inn, where I staid all night, beginning now to wish that I had never left home. I cut so miserable a figure too, that I found by the questions ask'd me I was suspected to be some runaway servant, and in danger of being taken up on that suspicion. However I proceeded the next day, and got in the evening to an inn within 8 or 10 miles of Burlington, kept by one Dr. Brown.

He ent[e]red into conversation with me while I took some refreshment, and, finding I had read a little, became very sociable and friendly. Our acquaintance continu'd as long as he liv'd. He had been, I imagine, an itinerant doctor, for there was no town in England, or country in Europe, of which he could not give a very particular account. He had some letters, and was ingenious, but much of an unbeliever, and wickedly undertook, some years after to travesty the Bible in doggrel verse, as Cotton had done Virgil. By this means he set many of the facts in a very ridiculous light, and might have hurt weak minds if his work had been published:—but it never was.—At his house I lay that night, and the next morning reach'd Burlington.—But had the mortification to find that the regular boats were gone a little before my coming, and no other expected to go till Tuesday, this being Saturday. Wherefore I returned to an old woman in the town of whom I had bought gingerbread to eat on the water, and ask'd her advice; she invited me to lodge at her house till a passage by water should offer: and being tired with my foot travelling, I accepted the invitation. She understanding I was a printer, would have had me stay at that town and follow my business, being ignorant of the stock necessary to begin with. She was very hospitable, gave me a dinner of ox cheek with great good will, accepting only of a pot of ale in return. And I thought myself fix'd till Tuesday should come. However walking in the evening by the side of the river, a boat came by, which I found was going towards Philadelphia, with several people in her. They took me in, and as there was no wind, we row'd all the way; and about midnight not having yet seen the city, some of the company were confident we must have passed it, and would row no farther, the others knew not where we were, so we put towards the shore, got into a creek, landed near an old fence[,] with the rails of which we made a fire, the night being cold, in October, and there we remain'd till daylight. Then one of the company knew the place to be Cooper's Creek a little above Philadelphia, which we saw as soon as we got out of the creek,

**2. Burlington**—As a glance at the map will show, Franklin crossed New Jersey in its narrowest part in a diagonal direction to Burlington, on the Delaware River, where he hoped to find a boat to take him the few remaining miles to Philadelphia. **10. Dr. Brown**—This is Dr. John Browne (died 1737), who lived on the York Road, and of whom little is known. But inasmuch as Browne advertised in the *American Weekly Mercury* for Sept. 1, 1726, for a runaway servant, Franklin's fear of being taken for such a runaway has a certain irony. See *New Jersey Archives*, First Series, Vol. XI, index under "Browne." **15. some letters**—some education. **17. Cotton . . . Virgil**—Charles Cotton (1630-1687) published in 1664 *Scarronides, or the First Book of Virgil Travestie*, which was amplified and coarsened in succeeding editions. **38. Cooper's Creek**—This creek, the natural upper boundary of Camden, New Jersey, runs into the Delaware River from the New Jersey side.



and arriv'd there about 8 or 9 o'clock, on the Sunday morning, and landed at the Market street wharff.

I have been the more particular in this description of my journey, and shall be so of my first entry into that city, that you may in your mind compare such  
 5 unlikely beginnings with the figure I have since made there. I was in my working dress, my best cloaths being to come round by sea. I was dirty from my journey; my pockets were stuff'd out with shirts and stockings; I knew no soul, nor where to look for lodging. I was fatigued with travelling, rowing and want of rest, I was very hungry, and my whole stock of cash consisted of  
 10 a Dutch dollar and about a shilling in copper. The latter I gave the people of the boat for my passage, who at first refus'd it, on acct of my rowing; but I insisted on their taking it, a man being sometimes more generous when he has but a little money than when he has plenty, perhaps thro' fear of being thought to have but little. Then I walk'd up the street, gazing about, till near  
 15 the market house I met a boy with bread. I had made many a meal on bread, and inquiring where he got it, I went immediately to the baker's he directed me to, in Second street, and ask'd for bisket, intending such as we had in Boston, but they it seems were not made in Philadelphia, then I ask'd for a threepenny loaf, and was told they had none such: so not considering or know-  
 20 ing the difference of money and the greater cheapness nor the names of his bread, I bad him give me threepenny worth of any sort. He gave me three great puffy rolls. I was surpriz'd at the quantity, but took it, and having no room in my pockets, walk'd off, with a roll under each arm, and eating the other. Thus I went up Market street as far as fourth street, passing by the  
 25 door of Mr. Read, my future wife's father, when she standing at the door saw me, and thought I made as I certainly did a most awkward ridiculous appearance. Then I turn'd and went down Chestnut street and part of Walnut street, eating my roll all the way, and coming round found myself again at Market street wharff, near the boat I came in, to which I went for a draught  
 30 of the river water, and, being fill'd with one of my rolls, gave the other two to a woman and her child that came down the river in the boat with us, and were waiting to go farther. Thus refresh'd I walk'd again up the street, which by this time had many clean dress'd people in it who were all walking the same way; I join'd them, and thereby was led into the great meeting house  
 35 of the Quakers near the market. I sat down among them, and after looking round awhile and hearing nothing said, being very drowsy thro' labour and want of rest the preceding night, I fell fast asleep, and continu'd so till the meeting broke up, when one was kind enough to rouse me. This was, therefore, the first house I was in or slept in in Philadelphia.

40 Walking down again towards the river, and, looking in the faces of people, I met a young Quaker man whose countenance I lik'd, and accosting him requested he would tell me where a stranger could get lodging. We were then near the sign of the Three Mariners. Here, says he, is one place that entertains strangers, but it is not a reputable house; if thee wilt walk with me, I'll show

**25. door of Mr. Read**—The various places associated with Franklin's earlier years in Philadelphia may be studied from a map of the city made in 1750 by N. Scull and G. Heap, reproduced in Fay, *Franklin*, opposite p. 111.

thee a better. He brought me to the Crooked Billet in Water street. Here I got a dinner. And while I was eating it, several sly questions were ask'd me, as it seemed to be suspected from my youth and appearance, that I might be some runaway. After dinner my sleepiness return'd, and being shown to a bed, I lay down without undressing, and slept till six in the evening; was call'd to supper, went to bed again very early and slept soundly till next morning. Then I made myself as tidy as I could, and went to Andrew Bradford the printer's. I found in the shop the old man his father, whom I had seen at New York, and who travelling on horseback had got to Philadelphia before me. He introduc'd me to his son, who receiv'd me civilly, gave me a breakfast, but told me he did not at present want a hand, being lately supply'd with one. But there was another printer in town lately set up, one Keimer, who perhaps might employ me; if not, I should be welcome to lodge at his house, and he would give me a little work to do now and then till fuller business should offer.

The old gentleman said, he would go with me to the new printer: And when we found him, Neighbor, says Bradford, I have brought to see you a young man of your business, perhaps you may want such a one. He ask'd me a few questions, put a composing stick in my hand to see how I work'd, and then said he would employ me soon, tho' he had just then nothing for me to do. And taking old Bradford whom he had never seen before, to be one of the towns people that had a good will for him, enter'd into a conversation on his present undertaking and prospects; while Bradford not discovering that he was the other printer's father, on Keimer's saying he expected soon to get the greatest part of the business into his own hands, drew him on by artful questions and starting little doubts, to explain all his views, what interest he rely'd on, and in what manner he intended to proceed. I who stood by and heard all, saw immediately that one of them was a crafty old sophister, and the other a mere novice. Bradford left me with Keimer, who was greatly surpriz'd when I told him who the old man was.

Keimer's printing-house I found, consisted of an old shatter'd press, and one small, worn-out font of English, which he was then using himself, composing in it an elegy on Aquila Rose before-mentioned, an ingenious young man of excellent character much respected in the town, clerk of the Assembly, and a pretty poet. Keimer made verses, too, but very indifferently. He could not be said to write them, for his manner was to compose them in the types directly out of his head; so there being no copy, but one pair of cases, and the elegy likely to require all the letter[s], no one could help him.—I endeavour'd to put his press (which he had not yet us'd, and of which he understood nothing) into order fit to be work'd with; and, promising to come and print off his elegy as soon as he should have got it ready, I return'd to Bradford's who gave me a little job to do for the present, [and] there I lodged and

12. **Keimer**—Samuel Keimer (died 1738 or thereafter), a member of a visionary Protestant sect known as the French Prophets, was born in England, and emigrated to America in 1722. The rest of his story is told in the *Autobiography*. 31. **English**—fourteen-point type. The standard font of type for books is usually 10-point or long primer; hence, Franklin remarks upon the inadequacies of Keimer's shop. 36. **cases**—Type is distributed into two sets of cases, one containing boxes for each of the capital letters, and one for the "lower case" letters (whence the term).

dieted. A few days after[,] Keimer sent for me to print off the elegy. And now he had got another pair of cases, and a pamphlet to reprint, on which he set me to work.

These two printers I found poorly qualified for their business. Bradford  
 5 had not been bred to it, and was very illiterate; and Keimer tho' something of a scholar, was a mere compositor, knowing nothing of presswork. He had been one of the French prophets and could act their enthusiastic agitations. At this time he did not profess any particular religion, but something of all on occasion; was very ignorant of the world, and had, as I afterward found,  
 10 a good deal of the knave in his composition. He did not like my lodging at Bradford's while I work'd with him. He had a house indeed, but without furniture, so he could not lodge me: But he got me a lodging at Mr. Read's, before-mentioned, who was the owner of his house. And my chest and clothes being come by this time, I made rather a more respectable appearance in the eyes  
 15 of Miss Read than I had done when she first happen'd to see me eating my roll in the street.

I began now to have some acquaintance among the young people of the town, that were lovers of reading, with whom I spent my evenings very pleasantly and gaining money by my industry and frugality, I lived very agreeably,  
 20 forgetting Boston as much as I could, and not desiring that any there should know where I resided, except my friend Collins who was in my secret, and kept it when I wrote to him. At length an incident happened that sent me back again much sooner than I had intended.

I had a brother-in-law, Robert Holmes, master of a sloop, that traded between  
 25 Boston and Delaware. He being at New Castle 40 miles below Philadelphia, heard there of me, and wrote me a letter, mentioning the concern of my friends in Boston at my abrupt departure, assuring me of their good will to me, and that every thing would be accommodated to my mind if I would return, to which he exhorted me very earnestly. I wrote an answer to his letter,  
 30 thank'd him for his advice, but stated my reasons for quitting Boston fully, and in such a light as to convince him I was not so wrong as he had apprehended. Sir William Keith, governor of the province, was then at New Castle, and Capt. Holmes happening to be in company with him when my letter came to hand, spoke to him of me, and show'd him the letter. The governor  
 35 read it, and seem'd surpriz'd when he was told my age. He said I appear'd a young man of promising parts, and therefore should be encouraged: The printers at Philadelphia were wretched ones, and if I would set up there, he made no doubt I should succeed; for his part, he would procure me the public business, and do me every other service in his power. This my brother-in-law  
 40 afterwards told me in Boston. But I knew as yet nothing of it; when, one day

1. **dieted**—that is, boarded. 2. **pamphlet to reprint**—This is possibly a pamphlet entitled *A Parable*, by Keimer and Franklin, because of which, at their monthly meeting in September, 1723, the Quakers repudiated Keimer. 32. **Sir William Keith**—(1680-1749) almost the only royal governor to espouse the popular cause in our colonial history; after serving as surveyor-general of the customs for southern North America, was appointed lieutenant-governor of Pennsylvania and Delaware, arriving in Philadelphia May 31, 1717, and was finally forced out of office by the Penn family in 1726. He was later in great financial distress.

Keimer and I being at work together near the window, we saw the governor and another gentleman (which prov'd to be Col. French, of New Castle) finely dress'd, come directly across the street to our house, and heard them at the door. Keimer ran down immediately, thinking it a visit to him. But the governor enquir'd for me, came up, and with a condescension and politeness I had been quite unus'd to, made me many compliments, desired to be acquainted with me, blam'd me kindly for not having made myself known to him when I first came to the place, and would have me away with him to the tavern, where he was going with Col. French to taste as he said some excellent Madeira. I was not a little surpriz'd, and Keimer star'd like a pig poison'd. I went however with the governor and Col. French, to a tavern [at] the corner of Third street, and over the Madeira he propos'd my setting up my business, laid before me the probabilities of success, and both he and Col. French, assur'd me I should have their interest and influence in procuring the publick business of both governments. On my doubting whether my father would assist me in it, Sir William said he would give me a letter to him, in which he would state the advantages, and he did not doubt of prevailing with him. So it was concluded I should return to Boston in the first vessel with the governor's letter recommending me to my father. In the mean time the intention was to be kept secret, and I went on working with Keimer as usual, the governor sending for me now and then to dine with him, a very great honour I thought it, and conversing with me in the most affable, familiar, and friendly manner imaginable. About the end of April 1724 a little vessel offer'd for Boston. I took leave of Keimer as going to see my friends. The governor gave me an ample letter, saying many flattering things of me to my father, and strongly recommending the project of my setting up at Philadelphia, as a thing that must make my fortune. We struck on a shoal in going down the bay and sprung a leak, we had a blustering time at sea, and were oblig'd to pump almost continually, at which I took my turn. We arriv'd safe however at Boston in about a fortnight. I had been absent seven months and my friends had heard nothing of me; for my br. Holmes was not yet return'd, and had not written about me. My unexpected appearance surpriz'd the family; all were however very glad to see me and made me welcome, except my brother. I went to see him at his printing-house: I was better dress'd than ever while in his service, having a genteel new suit from head to foot, a watch, and my pockets lin'd with near five pounds sterling in silver. He receiv'd me not very frankly, look'd me all over, and turn'd to his work again. The journeymen were inquisitive where I had been, what sort of a country it was, and how I lik'd it? I prais'd it much, and the happy life I led in it, expressing strongly my intention of returning to it; and one of them asking what kind of money we had there, I produc'd a handful of silver and spread it before them, which was a kind of raree show they had not been us'd to, paper being the money of Boston. Then I took an opportunity of letting them see my watch: and,

2. Col. French—Colonel John French was a member of the governor's council for New Castle County from 1717 to 1726, and had been an officer during Queen Anne's War. He seems to have died in 1728. (Information from Professor George H. Ryden, University of Delaware.)

lastly, (my brother still grum and sullen) I gave them a piece of eight to drink, and took my leave. This visit of mine offended him extreemly. For when my mother some time after spoke to him of a reconciliation, and of her wishes to see us on good terms together, and that we might live for the future as  
 5 brothers, he said, I had insulted him in such a manner before his people that he could never forget or forgive it. In this however he was mistaken.

My father received the governor's letter with some apparent surprize; but said little of it to me for some days; when Capt. Holmes returning, he show'd it to him, ask'd him if he knew Keith, and what kind of a man he was: Add-  
 10 ing his opinion that he must be of small discretion, to think of setting a boy up in business who wanted yet 3 years of being at man's estate. Holmes said what he could in fav<sup>r</sup> of the project; but my father was clear in the impropriety of it; and at last gave a flat denial to it. Then he wrote a civil letter to Sir William thanking him for the patronage he had so kindly offered me, but  
 15 declining to assist me as yet in setting up, I being in his opinion too young to be trusted with the management of a business so important, and for which the preparation must be so expensive.

My friend and companion Collins, who was a clerk at the post-office, pleas'd with the account I gave him of my new country, determin'd to go thither also:  
 20 And while I waited for my fathers determination, he set out before me by land to Rhodeisland, leaving his books which were a pretty collection of mathe-matics and natural philosophy, to come with mine and me to New York where he propos'd to wait for me. My father, tho' he did not approve Sir William's proposition was yet pleas'd that I had been able to obtain so advan-  
 25 tageous a character from a person of such note where I had resided, and that I had been so industrious and careful as to equip myself so handsomely in so short a time: therefore seeing no prospect of an accommodation between my brother and me, he gave his consent to my returning again to Philadelphia, advis'd me to behave respectfully to the people there, endeavour to obtain  
 30 the general esteem, and avoid lampooning and libelling to which he thought I had too much inclination; telling me, that by steady industry and a prudent parsimony, I might save enough by the time I was one and twenty to set me up and that if I came near the matter he would help me out with the rest. This was all I could obtain, except some small gifts as tokens of his and  
 35 my mother's love, when I embark'd again for New-York, now with their approbation and their blessing.

The sloop putting in at Newport, Rhodeisland, I visited my brother John, who had been married and settled there some years. He received me very affectionately, for he always lov'd me. A friend of his, one Vernon, having  
 40 some money due to him in Pensilvania, about 35 pounds currency, desired I would receive it for him, and keep it till I had his directions what to remit it in. Accordingly, he gave me an order. This afterwards occasion'd me a good deal of uneasiness. At Newport we took in a number of passengers for New York: Among which were two young women, companions, and a grave, sensi-  
 45 ble, matron-like Quaker woman with her attendants.—I had shown an oblig-

1. piece of eight—Spanish dollar of eight reals. 13. civil—polite. 20. determination—decision. 21. pretty—fair. 22. natural philosophy—natural science. 27. accommodation—reconciliation.

ing readiness to do her some little services which impress'd her I suppose with a degree of good-will towards me. Therefore when she saw a daily growing familiarity between me and the two young women, which they appear'd to encourage, she took me aside and said, Young man, I am concern'd for thee, as thou has no friend with thee, and seems not to know much of the world, or of the snares youth is expos'd to; depend upon it those are very bad women, I can see it in all their actions, and if thee art not upon thy guard, they will draw thee into some danger: they are strangers to thee, and I advise thee in a friendly concern for thy welfare, to have no acquaintance with them. As I seem'd at first not to think so ill of them as she did, she mentioned some things she had observ'd and heard that had escap'd my notice; but now convinc'd me she was right. I thank'd her for her kind advice, and promis'd to follow it. When we arriv'd at New York, they told me where they liv'd, and invited me to come and see them: but I avoided it. And it was well I did: For the next day, the captain miss'd a silver spoon and some other things that had been taken out of his cabin, and knowing that these were a couple of strumpets, he got a warrant to search their lodgings, found the stolen goods, and had the thieves punish'd. So tho' we had escap'd a sunken rock which we scrap'd upon in the passage, I thought this escape of rather more importance to me. At New York I found my friend Collins, who had arriv'd there some time before me. We had been intimate from children, and had read the same books together. But he had the advantage of more time for reading and studying and a wonderful genius for mathematical learning in which he far outstript me. While I liv'd in Boston most of my hours of leisure for conversation were spent with him, and he continu'd a sober as well as an industrious lad; was much respected for his learning by several of the clergy and other gentlemen, and seemed to promise making a good figure in life: but during my absence he had acquir'd a habit of sotting with brandy; and I found by his own account and what I heard from others, that he had been drunk every day since his arrival at New York, and behav'd very oddly. He had gam'd too and lost his money, so that I was oblig'd to discharge his lodgings, and defray his expenses to and at Philadelphia: Which prov'd extreamly inconvenient to me. The then governor of N[ew] York[,] Burnet, son of Bishop Burnet hearing from the captain that a young man, one of his passengers, had a great many books, desired he would bring me to see him. I waited upon him accordingly, and should have taken Collins with me but that he was not sober. The gov<sup>r</sup>. treated me with great civility, show'd me his library, which was a very large one, and we had a good deal of conversation about books and authors. This was the second governor who had done me the honour to take notice of me; which to a poor boy like me was very pleasing.—We proceeded to Philadelphia. I received on the way Vernon's money, without which we could hardly have finish'd our journey. Collins wish'd to be employ'd in some counting house; but whether they discover'd his dramming by his breath, or by his

33. **Burnet**—William Burnet (1688-1729), son of Bishop Gilbert Burnet, famed as a historian, was appointed governor of New York and New Jersey in 1720. In 1728 he was transferred to Massachusetts. Burnet, unlike some colonial governors, was a highly cultivated man. See p. 105, below.

behaviour, tho' he had some recommendations, he met with no success in any application, and continu'd lodging and boarding at the same house with me and at my expense. Knowing I had that money of Vernon's he was continually borrowing of me, still promising repayment as soon as he should be in business. At length he had got so much of it, that I was distress'd to think what I should do, in case of being call'd on to remit it. His drinking continu'd, about which we sometimes quarrel'd, for when a little intoxicated he was very fractious. Once in a boat on the Delaware with some other young men, he refused to row in his turn: I will be row'd home, says he. We will not row you, says I. You must or stay all night on the water, says he, just as you please. The others said, Let us row: what signifies it? But my mind being soured with his other conduct, I continu'd to refuse. So he swore he would make me row, or throw me overboard; and coming along stepping on the thwarts towards me, when he came up and struck at me I clapped my hand under his crutch, and rising pitched him head-foremost into the river. I knew he was a good swimmer, and so was under little concern about him; but before he could get round to lay hold of the boat, we had with a few strokes pull'd her out of his reach. And ever when he drew near the boat, we ask'd if he would row, striking a few strokes to slide her away from him. He was ready to die with vexation, and obstinately would not promise to row; however seeing him at last beginning to tire, we lifted him in; and brought him home dripping wet in the evening. We hardly exchange'd a civil word afterwards; and a West India captain who had a commission to procure a tutor for the sons of a gentleman at Barbadoes, happening to meet with him, agreed to carry him thither. He left me then, promising to remit me the first money he should receive in order to discharge the debt. But I never heard of him after. The breaking into this money of Vernon's was one of the first great errata of my life[.] And this affair show'd that my father was not much out in his judgment when he suppos'd me too young to manage business of importance. But Sir William, on reading his letter, said he was too prudent. There was great difference in persons, and discretion did not always accompany years, nor was youth always without it. And since he will not set you up, says he, I will do it myself. Give me an inventory of the things necessary to be had from England, and I will send for them. You shall repay me when you are able; I am resolv'd to have a good printer here, and I am sure you must succeed. This was spoken with such an appearance of cordiality, that I had not the least doubt of his meaning what he said. I had hitherto kept the proposition of my setting up[.] a secret in Philadelphia, and I still kept it. Had it been known that I depended on the governor, probably some friend that knew him better would have advis'd me not to rely on him, as I afterwards heard it as his known character to be liberal of promises which he never meant to keep.—Yet unsolicited as he was by me, how could I think his generous offers insincere? I believ'd him one of the best men in the world.

I presented him an inventory of a little print<sup>g</sup> house, amounting by my computation to about 100 £ sterling. He lik'd it, but ask'd me if my being on the spot in England to chuse the types and see that every thing was good

of the kind, might not be of some advantage. Then, says he, when there, you may make acquaintances and establish correspondencies in the bookselling and stationary way. I agreed that this might be advantageous. Then, says he, get yourself ready to go with Annis; which was the annual ship, and the only one at that time usually passing between London and Philadelphia. But it would be some months before Annis sail'd, so I continu'd working with Keimer, fretting about the money Collins had got from me, and in daily apprehensions of being call'd upon by Vernon, which however did not happen for some years after. 5

I believe I have omitted mentioning that in my first voyage from Boston, being becalm'd off Block Island, our people set about catching cod and hauled up a great many. Hitherto I had stuck to my resolution of not eating animal food; and on this occasion I consider'd with my master Tryon, the taking every fish as a kind of unprovoked murder, since none of them had or ever could do us any injury that might justify the slaughter. All this seem'd very reasonable. But I had formerly been a great lover of fish, and, when this came hot out of the frying pan, it smelt admirably well. I balanc'd some time between principle and inclination: till I recollected, that when the fish were opened, I saw smaller fish taken out of their stomachs; then thought I, if you eat one another, I don't see why we mayn't eat you. So I din'd upon cod very heartily and continu'd to eat with other people, returning only now and then occasionally to a vegetable diet. So convenient a thing it is to be a *reasonable creature*, since it enables one to find or make a reason for every thing one has a mind to do. 10 15 20

Keimer and I liv'd on a pretty good familiar footing and agreed tolerably well: for he suspected nothing of my setting up. He retain'd a great deal of his old enthusiasms, and lov'd argumentation. We therefore had many disputations. I used to work him so with my Socratic method, and had trepann'd him so often by questions apparently so distant from any point we had in hand, and yet by degrees led to the point, and brought him into difficulties and contradictions that at last he grew ridiculously cautious, and would hardly answer me the most common question, without asking first, *What do you intend to infer from that?* However it gave him so high an opinion of my abilities in the confuting way, that he seriously proposed my being his colleague in a project he had of setting up a new sect. He was to preach the doctrines, and I was to confound all opponents. When he came to explain with me upon the doctrines, I found several conundrums which I objected to, unless I might have my way a little too, and introduce some of mine. Keimer wore his beard at full length, because somewhere in the Mosaic law it is said, *thou shalt not mar the corners of thy beard*. He likewise kept the seventh day Sabbath; and these two points were essentials with him. I dislik'd both, but agreed to admit them upon condition of his adopting the doctrine of using no animal food. I doubt, said he, my constitution will not bear that. I assur'd him it would, and that he would be the better for it. He was usually a great glutton, and I promis'd myself some diversion in half-starving him. He agreed to try 25 30 35 40 45

11. Block Island—an island ten miles off the coast of Rhode Island. 28. trepann'd—entrapped. 37. conundrums—difficult questions. 39-40. thou shalt not . . .—Lev. 19:27.



the practice if I would keep him company. I did so and we held it for three months. We had our victuals dress'd, and brought to us regularly by a woman in the neighbourhood, who had from me a list of 40 dishes, to be prepar'd for us at different times, in all which there was neither fish flesh nor fowl, and  
 5 the whim suited me the better at this time from the cheapness of it, not costing us above 18<sup>d</sup> sterling each, per week. I have since kept several Lents most strictly, leaving the common diet for that, and that for the common, abruptly, without the least inconvenience: So that I think there is little in the advice of making those changes by easy gradations. I went on pleasantly, but poor  
 10 Keimer suffer'd grievously, tir'd of the project, long'd for the flesh pots of Egypt, and order'd a roast pig. He invited me and two women friends to dine with him, but it being brought too soon upon the table, he could not resist the temptation, and ate it all up before we came.

I had made some courtship during this time to Miss Read. I had a great  
 15 respect and affection for her, and had some reason to believe she had the same for me: but as I was about to take a long voyage, and we were both very young, only a little above 18, it was thought most prudent by her mother to prevent our going too far at present, as a marriage if it was to take place would be more convenient after my return, when I should be as I expected  
 20 set up in my business. Perhaps too she thought my expectations not so well founded as I imagined them to be.

My chief acquaintances at this time were, Charles Osborne, Joseph Watson, and James Ralph; all lovers of reading. The two first were clerks to an eminent scrivener or conveyancer in the town, Charles Brogden; the other was clerk to  
 25 a merchant. Watson was a pious sensible young man, of great integrity.—The others rather more lax in their principles of religion, particularly Ralph, who as well as Collins had been unsettled by me, for which they both made me suffer.—Osborne was sensible, candid, frank, sincere and affectionate to his friends; but in literary matters too fond of criticising. Ralph, was ingenious,  
 30 genteel in his manners, and extreamly eloquent; I think I never knew a prettier talker. Both of them great admirers of poetry, and began to try their hands in little pieces. Many pleasant walks we four had together on Sundays into the woods near Schuylkill, where we read to one another and conferr'd on what we read. Ralph was inclin'd to pursue the study of poetry, not doubting  
 35 but he might become eminent in it and make his fortune by it, alledging that the best poets must when they first began to write, make as many faults as he did.—Osborne dissuaded him, assur'd him he had no genius for poetry, and advis'd him to think of nothing beyond the business he was bred to; that in the mercantile way tho' he had no stock, he might by his diligence and  
 40 punctuality recommend himself to employment as a factor, and in time acquire

10-11. *flesh pots of Egypt*—Cf. Ex. 16:3. 22-23. **Charles Osborne . . . James Ralph**—The most notable of these companions of young Franklin was James Ralph (1705?-1762), whose early career is given in the *Autobiography*. A mediocre poet, he was denounced by Pope, as Franklin later indicates. His historical writing was of some importance. See his life in the Dictionary of National Biography. 24. **scrivener . . . conveyancer**—A scrivener is a notary; a conveyancer is a lawyer who prepares documents for the conveyance of property and investigates the titles of land. 33. **near Schuylkill**—The "romantic" scenery of the region about the Schuylkill River near Philadelphia was often celebrated by eighteenth-century American writers.

wherewith to trade on his own account. I approv'd the amusing one's self with poetry now and then, so far as to improve one's language, but no farther. On this it was propos'd that we should each of us, at our next meeting produce a piece of our own composing, in order to improve by our mutual observations, criticisms, and corrections. As language and expression was what we had in view, we excluded all considerations of invention, by agreeing that the task should be a version of the 18<sup>th</sup> Psalm, which describes the descent of a Deity. When the time of our meeting drew nigh, Ralph call'd on me first, and let me know his piece was ready. I told him I had been busy, and having little inclination had done nothing. He then show'd me his piece for my opinion, and I much approv'd it, as it appear'd to me to have great merit. Now, says he, Osborne never will allow the least merit in any thing of mine, but makes 1000 criticisms out of mere envy. He is not so jealous of you. I wish therefore you would take this piece, and produce it as yours. I will pretend not to have had time, and so produce nothing: We shall then see what he will say to it. It was agreed, and I immediately transcrib'd it that it might appear in my own hand. We met. Watson's performance was read: there were some beauties in it: but many defects. Osborne's was read: It was much better. Ralph did it justice, remark'd some faults, but applauded the beauties. He himself had nothing to produce. I was backward, seem'd desirous of being excused, had not had sufficient time to correct, etc. but no excuse could be admitted, produce I must. It was read and repeated; Watson and Osborne gave up the contest; and join'd in applauding it. Ralph only made some criticisms and propos'd some amendments; but I defended my text. Osborne was against Ralph, and told him he was no better a critic than poet; so he dropt the argument. As they two went home together, Osborne express'd himself still more strongly in favour of what he thought my production, having restrain'd himself before as he said, lest I should think it flattery. But who would have imagin'd, says he, that Franklin had been capable of such a performance; such painting, such force! such fire! he has even improv'd the original! In his common conversation, he seems to have no choice of words; he hesitates and blunders; and yet, good God! how he writes!—When we next met, Ralph discover'd the trick we had plaid him, and Osborne was a little laugh'd at. This transaction fix'd Ralph in his resolution of becoming a poet. I did all I could to dissuade him from it, but he continued scribbling verses, till *Pope* cured him. He became however a pretty good prose writer. More of him hereafter. But as I may not have occasion again to mention the other two, I shall just remark here, that Watson died in my arms a few years after, much lamented, being the best of our set. Osborne went to the West Indies, where he became an eminent lawyer and made money, but died young. He and I had made a serious agreement, that the one who happen'd first to die, should

7. 18<sup>th</sup> Psalm—Only a portion of the Psalm in question describes the “descent of a Deity.” Cf. Ps. 18: 6-16. 35. Pope—In later editions of the *Dunciad* Pope (in revenge for a satire of Ralph's called *Sawney*) referred to Ralph as follows (III, lines 165-66):

“Silence, ye Wolves! while Ralph to Cynthia howls,  
And makes night hideous—Answer him, ye Owls!”

Pope also has other abusive references to Ralph. Cf. *Dunciad*, I, lines 215-16.

if possible make a friendly visit to the other, and acquaint him how he found things in that separate state. But he never fulfill'd his promise.

The governor, seeming to like my company, had me frequently to his house; and his setting me up was always mention'd as a fix'd thing. I was to take  
 5 with me letters recommendatory to a number of his friends, besides the letter of credit to furnish me with the necessary money for purchasing the press and types, paper, etc. For these letters I was appointed to call at different times, when they were to be ready, but a future time was still named. Thus he went on till the ship whose departure too had been several times postponed was  
 10 on the point of sailing. Then when I call'd to take my leave and receive the letters, his secretary, Dr. Bard, came out to me and said the governor was extremely busy, in writing, but would be down at Newcastle before the ship, and there the letters would be delivered to me.

Ralph, tho' married and having one child, had determined to accompany  
 15 me in this voyage. It was thought he intended to establish a correspondence, and obtain goods to sell on commission. But I found afterwards, that thro' some discontent with his wife's relations, he purposed to leave her on their hands, and never return again.—Having taken leave of my friends, and interchang'd some promises with Miss Read, I left Philadelphia in the ship,  
 20 which anchor'd at Newcastle. The governor was there. But when I went to his lodging, the secretary came to me from him with the civillest message in the world, that he could not then see me being engaged in business of the utmost importance, but should send the letters to me on board, wish'd me heartily a good voyage and a speedy return, etc. I return'd on board, a little  
 25 puzzled, but still not doubting.—

Mr. Andrew Hamilton, a famous lawyer of Philadelphia, had taken passage in the same ship for himself and son: and with Mr. Denham a Quaker merchant, and Messrs. Onion and Russel[,] masters of an iron work in Maryland, had engag'd the great cabin; so that Ralph and I were forc'd to take up  
 30 with a birth in the steerage: And none on board knowing us, were considered as ordinary persons.—But Mr. Hamilton and his son (it was James, since governor) return'd from New Castle to Philadelphia, the father being recall'd by a great fee to plead for a seized ship.—And, just before we sail'd, Col. French coming on board, and showing me great respect, I was more taken  
 35 notice of, and with my friend Ralph invited by the other gentlemen to come into the cabin, there being now room. Accordingly, we remov'd thither.

Understanding that Col. French had brought on board the governor's dispatches, I ask'd the captain for those letters that were to be under my care.

**11. Dr. Bard**—Dr. John Bard (1716-1799) was a famous physician and friend of Franklin, but since in 1724 he was only eight years old, it is probable that Franklin has telescoped the doctor with his father, Peter Bard, a member of the governor's council of New Jersey, who died in 1734. **26. Andrew Hamilton**—(died 1741) the most famous American lawyer of the first part of the eighteenth century, by his speech in behalf of John Peter Zenger did much to end official censorship of the press in the colonies. From 1724 to 1726 he served as the agent in England of the proprietary government of Pennsylvania. See his life in the Dictionary of American Biography. **28. Onion and Russel**—Owners of the Principio Iron Works (Smyth). **31. James**—James Hamilton (1710?-1783) served as governor of Pennsylvania on four separate occasions from 1748 to 1773. His sympathies were proprietary and royalist. See his life in the Dictionary of American Biography.

He said all were put into the bag together; and he could not then come at them; but before we landed in England, I should have an opportunity of picking them out. So I was satisfy'd for the present, and we proceeded on our voyage. We had a sociable company in the cabin, and lived uncommonly well, having the addition of all Mr. Hamilton's stores, who had laid in plentifully. 5 In this passage Mr. Denham contracted a friendship for me that continued during his life. The voyage was otherwise not a pleasant one, as we had a great deal of bad weather.

When we came into the Channel, the captain kept his word with me, and gave me an opportunity of examining the bag for the governor's letters. I 10 found none upon which my name was put, as under my care; I pick'd out 6 or 7 that by the hand writing I thought might be the promis'd letters, especially as one of them was directed to Basket the king's printer, and another to some stationer. We arriv'd in London the 24<sup>th</sup> of December, 1724. I waited upon the stationer who came first in my way, delivering the letter as from Gov. Keith. 15 I don't know such a person, says he: but opening the letter, O, this is from Riddlesden; I have lately found him to be a compleat rascal, and I will have nothing to do with him, nor receive any letters from him. So putting the letter into my hand, he turn'd on his heel and left me to serve some customer. I was surprized to find these were not the governor's letters. And after recollect- 20 ing and comparing circumstances, I began to doubt his sincerity.—I found my friend Denham, and opened the whole affair to him. He let me into Keith's character, told me there was not the least probability that he had written any letters for me, that no one who knew him had the smallest dependence on him, and he laught at the notion of the governor's giving me a letter of credit, hav- 25 ing as he said no credit to give.—On my expressing some concern about what I should do: he advis'd me to endeavour getting some employment in the way of my business. Among the printers here, says he, you will improve yourself; and when you return to America, you will set up to greater advantage.—

We both of us happen'd to know, as well as the stationer, that Riddlesden 30 the attorney was a very knave. He had half ruin'd Miss Read's father by acquiring his note he bound for him. By this letter it appear'd, there was a secret scheme on foot to the prejudice of Hamilton, (suppos'd to be then coming over with us,) and that Keith was concern'd in it with Riddlesden. Den- 35 ham, who was a friend of Hamilton's, thought he ought to be acquainted with it. So when he arriv'd in England, which was soon after, partly from resentment and ill-will to Keith and Riddlesden, and partly from good will to him: I waited on him, and gave him the letter. He thank'd me cordially, the informa- 40 tion being of importance to him. And from that time he became my friend, greatly to my advantage afterwards on many occasions.

But what shall we think of a governor's playing such pitiful tricks, and imposing so grossly on a poor ignorant boy! It was a habit he had acquired.

13. **Basket**—John Baskett (died 1742), made king's printer about 1709, and publisher of the so-called Vinegar Bible. 31-32. **acquiring his note he bound for him**—Franklin's handwriting in this passage is well-nigh undecipherable. The Bigelow reading "persuading him to be bound for him" is, however, clearly wrong. The sense is that Mr. Read had endorsed a note for Riddlesden. 35. **ought**—Franklin wrote *should*, then wrote **ought** to above it, and failed to cross out *should*.

He wish'd to please every body; and, having little to give, he gave expectations. He was otherwise an ingenious sensible man, a pretty good writer, and a good governor for the people, tho' not for his constituents the proprietaries, whose instructions he sometimes disregarded. Several of our best laws were of

5 his planning, and pass'd during his administration.

Ralph and I were inseparable companions. We took lodgings together in Little Britain at 3/6 p[er] a week, as much as we could then afford. He found some relations, but they were poor and unable to assist him. He now let me know his intentions of remaining in London, and that he never meant to re-  
 10 turn to Philad<sup>a</sup>.—He had brought no money with him, the whole he could muster having been expended in paying his passage. I had fifteen pistoles: So he borrowed occasionally of me to subsist while he was looking out for business.—He first endeavoured to get into the playhouse, believing himself qualify'd for an actor; but Wilkes, to whom he apply'd, advis'd him candidly  
 15 not to think of that employment, as it was impossible he should succeed in it. —Then he propos'd to Roberts, a publisher in Paternoster Row, to write for him a weekly paper like the Spectator, on certain conditions, which Roberts did not approve. Then he endeavour'd to get employm<sup>t</sup> as a hackney writer to copy for the stationers and lawyers about the Temple: but could find no  
 20 vacancy.

I immediately got into work at Palmer's then a famous printing house in Bartholomew Close; and here I continu'd near a year. I was pretty diligent; but spent with Ralph a good deal of my earnings in going to plays and other places of amusement. We had together consumed all my pistoles, and now just  
 25 rubb'd on from hand to mouth. He seem'd quite to forget his wife and child, and I by degrees my engagements w<sup>th</sup> Miss Read, to whom I never wrote more than one letter, and that was to let her know I was not likely soon to return. This was another of the great errata of my life, which I should wish to correct if I were to live it over again.—In fact, by our expences, I was constantly  
 30 kept unable to pay my passage.

At Palmer's I was employ'd in composing for the second edition of Wollaston's Religion of Nature. Some of his reasonings not appearing to me well-

7. **Little Britain**—a street (and section) in the heart of London, near St. Paul's Cathedral. The student should consult Sir Walter Besant, *London in the Eighteenth Century*, Macmillan, 1903, for the background of Franklin's first trip to England. 7. 3/6—three shillings sixpence. 11. **pistoles**—A pistole was a gold coin worth about 18 shillings. 14. **Wilkes**—Robert Wilks (1665?-1732), one of the most famous actors of the day, was one of the managers of Drury Lane Theatre during this period. 16. **Roberts**—It is difficult to identify this printer. There was a James Roberts near Stationers' Hall in 1706, and a James Roberts in Warwick Lane (which forms one of the termini for Paternoster Row) during Franklin's residence in London. See Henry R. Plomer, *A Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers . . . 1688 to 1725*, Oxford, 1932, p. 255. 16. **Paternoster Row**—A street near St. Paul's Cathedral long associated with the printing business. 19. **stationers**—properly, law stationers; tradesmen who sold legal forms required by lawyers, and also copied legal documents. 19. **Temple**—the Inner and Middle Temples, off Fleet Street, long associated with the legal profession. 21. **Palmer's**—Samuel Palmer (died 1732), author of an inferior *History of Printing*, and famous as a printer. 22. **Bartholomew Close**—a court associated with publishers a little north of Paternoster Row, near St. Bartholomew's Hospital of the present day. 31. **Wollaston's**—William Wollaston (1660-1724), one of the most famous deists of the period, wrote and privately printed *The Religion of Nature Delineated* in 1722, and published the work in 1724. According to Oswald, *Benjamin Franklin, Printer*, pp. 43-44, Franklin worked on the third edition of this book, not the second, as stated in the text.

founded, I wrote a little metaphysical piece, in which I made remarks on them. It was entitled *A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and pain*. I inscribed it to my friend Ralph.—I printed a small number. It occasion'd my being more consider'd by Mr. Palmer, as a young man of some ingenuity, tho' he seriously expostulated with me upon the principles of my pamphlet, which to him appear'd abominable. My printing this pamphlet was another erratum. 5

In our house there lodg'd a young woman; a millener, who I think had a shop in the Cloisters. She had been genteelly bred, was sensible and lively, and of most pleasing conversation. Ralph read plays to her in the evenings, they grew intimate, she took another lodging, and he follow'd her. They liv'd together some time, but he being still out of business, and her income not sufficient to maintain them with her child, he took a resolution of going from London to try for a country school, which he thought himself well qualify'd to undertake, as he wrote an excellent hand, and was a master of arithmetic and accounts.—This however he deem'd a business below him, and confident of future better fortune when he should be unwilling to have it known that he once was so meanly employ'd, he chang'd his name, and did me the honour to assume mine.—For I soon after had a letter from him acquainting me, that he was settled in a small village in Berkshire, I think it was where he taught reading and writing to 10 or a dozen boys at 6 pence each p[er] week, recommending Mrs. T. to my care, and desiring me to write to him directing for Mr. Franklin schoolmaster at such a place. He continu'd to write frequently, sending me large specimens of an epic poem, which he was then composing, and desiring my remarks and corrections.—These I gave him from time to time, but endeavour'd rather to discourage his proceeding. One of Young's satires was then just publish'd. I copy'd and sent him a great part of it, which set in a strong light the folly of pursuing the muses with any hope of advancement by them. All was in vain. Sheets of the poem continu'd to come by every post. In the mean time Mrs. T. having on his account lost her friends and business, was often in distresses, and us'd to send for me and borrow what I could spare to help her out of them. I grew fond of her company, and being at this time under no religious restraint, and presuming on my importance to her, I attempted familiarities (another erratum), which she repuls'd with a proper resentment, and acquainted him with my behaviour. This made a breach between us, and when he returned again to London, he let me know he thought I had cancell'd all the obligations he had been under to me.—So I 35

2-3. *A Dissertation . . . pain*—Franklin later destroyed (as he thought) all but one copy of this pamphlet, which is not included in the Smyth edition of his works. It was, however, reprinted, with many unauthorized changes, in 1733; and in 1930 the first edition was reprinted by the Facsimile Text Society. 7. *erratum*—Because the pamphlet denies the existence of vice and virtue. 8. The order of Franklin's paragraphs from "In our house" to "While I lodg'd" is not clear. He wrote the passage beginning "While I lodg'd" down through "for which he paid me handsomely" as additional material, but failed to indicate precisely where to insert it. The present arrangement differs from that of the Bigelow edition by bringing relevant material together. 9. *Cloisters*—Apparently the cloisters of (or near) St. Bartholomew's Church. 26. *Young's*—Edward Young (1683-1765) began publishing in 1725 his most famous satirical poem, first called *The Universal Passion*, four parts appearing that year. In 1728 the seven parts were published as *Love of Fame the Universal Passion*.

found I was never to expect his repaying me what I lent to him or advanc'd for him. This was however not then of much consequence, as he was totally unable: And in the loss of his friendship I found myself reliev'd from a burthen. I now began to think of getting a little money beforehand; and expecting better work, I left Palmer's to work at Watts's, near Lincoln's Inn Fields, a still greater printing house. Here I continu'd all the rest of my stay in London.

While I lodg'd in Little Britain I made an acquaintance with one Wilcox a bookseller, whose shop was at the next door. He had an immense collection of second-hand books. Circulating libraries were not then in use; but we agreed that on certain reasonable terms which I have now forgotten, I might take, read, and return any of his books. This I esteem'd a great advantage, and I made as much use of it as I could.

My pamphlet by some means falling into the hands of one Lyons, a surgeon, author of a book intitled *The Infallibility of Human Judgment* it occasioned an acquaintance between us; he took great notice of me, call'd on me often, to converse on those subjects, carried me to the Horns, a pale alehouse in—Lane, Cheapside, and introduc'd me to Dr. Mandeville, author of the *Fable of the Bees* who had a club there, of which he was the soul, being a most facetious entertaining companion. Lyons too introduced me to Dr. Pemberton, at Batson's Coffee house, who promis'd to give me an opportunity some time or other of seeing Sir Isaac Newton, of which I was extremely desirous; but this never happened.

I had brought over a few curiosities among which the principal was a purse made of the asbestos, which purifies by fire. Sir Hans Sloane heard of it, came to see me, and invited me to his house in Bloomsbury Square, where he show'd me all his curiosities, and persuaded me to let him add that to the number, for which he paid me handsomely.

At my first admission into this printing house, I took to working at press, imagining I felt a want of the bodily exercise I had been us'd to in America, where presswork is mix'd with composing, I drank only water; the other workmen, near 50 in number, were great guzzlers of beer. On occasion I car-

5. **Watts's**—John Watts (1700?-1763), one of the most important printers of London, had a shop in Little Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, which was just south of High Holborn Street, in 1725 a square associated with lawyers. 8. **Wilcox**—This was John (?) Wilcox (1721-1762?), a London bookseller. 15. **Infallibility**—*The Infallibility, Dignity and excellency of Humane Judgment* first appeared in 1719; second edition, 1721. It is simply credited to "Lyons" in the British Museum Catalogue. 17-18. **Horns . . . Cheapside**—According to Besant, *London in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 243, the Horn Tavern was in Carter Lane, south of St. Paul's, and not in Cheapside. There was also a tavern called the Horns at Highgate, four and one-half miles northwest, but it seems probable that Franklin meant the first named of these. 18. **Mandeville**—Bernard Mandeville (1670-1733), famous as the author of *The Fable of the Bees* (1714; 1729), a work preaching an ethical doctrine comparable to young Franklin's first treatise. 20. **Pemberton**—Henry Pemberton (1694-1771), editor of the third edition of Newton's *Principia* (1726), and author of *A View of Sir I. Newton's Philosophy* (1728). 21. **Batson's Coffee house**—Batson's Coffehouse, near the Temple, was frequented by merchants. 22. **Sir Isaac Newton**—The influence of Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), the greatest scientific mind of the age, upon Franklin's thought was profound. 25. **Sir Hans Sloane**—Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753), the most brilliant physician of the day in London, at his death left his collection of books and specimens to form the nucleus of the British Museum. 26. **Bloomsbury Square**—Bloomsbury Square, facing Bedford House, and just north of High Holborn, was then a new and fashionable part of London.

ried up and down stairs a large form of types in each hand, when others carried but one in both hands. They wonder'd to see from this and several instances that the water-American as they call'd me was *stronger* than themselves who drank *strong* beer. We had an alchouse boy who attended always in the house to supply the workmen. My companion at the press, drank every day a pint before breakfast, a pint at breakfast with his bread and cheese; a pint 5 between breakfast and dinner; a pint at dinner; a pint in the afternoon about six o'clock, and another when he had done his day's work. I thought it a detestable custom.—but it was necessary, he suppos'd, to drink *strong* beer that he might be *strong* to labour. I endeavour'd to convince him that the bodily 10 strength afforded by beer could only be in proportion to the grain or flour of the barley dissolved in the water of which it was made; that there was more flour in a penny-worth of bread, and therefore if he would eat that with a pint of water, it would give him more strength than a quart of beer.—He drank on however, and had 4 or 5 shillings to pay out of his wages every Saturday 15 night for that muddling liquor; an expence I was free from.—And thus these poor devils keep themselves always under.

Watts after some weeks desiring to have me in the composing-room, I left the pressmen. A new *bienvenu* or sum for drink, being 5/, was demanded of me by the compositors. I thought it an imposition, as I had paid below. The 20 master thought so too, and forbad my paying it. I stood out two or three weeks, was accordingly considered as an excommunicate, and had so many little pieces of private mischief done me, by mixing my sorts, transposing my pages, breaking my matter, etc., etc., and if I were ever so little out of the room, and all ascrib'd to the chapel ghost, which they said ever haunted those not regularly 25 admitted, that, notwithstanding the master's protection, I found myself oblig'd to comply and pay the money; convinc'd of the folly of being on ill terms with those one is to live with continually. I was now on a fair footing with them, and soon acquir'd considerable influence. I propos'd some reasonable alterations in their \* chapel laws, and carried them against all opposition. 30 From my example a great part of them, left their muddling breakfast of beer and bread and cheese, finding they could with me be supply'd from a neighbouring house with a large porringer of hot water-gruel, sprinkled with pepper, crumb'd with bread, and a bit of butter in it, for the price of a pint of beer, viz., three half pence. This was a more comfortable as well as 35 cheaper breakfast, and kept their heads clearer.—Those who continu'd sotting with beer all day, were often, by not paying, out of credit at the ale-house, and us'd to make interest with me to get beer, *their light*, as they phras'd it, *being out*. I watch'd the pay table on Saturday night, and collected what I stood engag'd for them, having to pay some times near thirty shillings a week 40 on their accounts.—This, and my being esteem'd a pretty good riggite, that is, a jocular verbal satyrist, supported my consequence in the society.—My

\* A printing house is always called a chappel, [sic] by the workmen.—(Franklin's note)

1. **form**—form, or forme, refers to the body of type locked in an iron chase (like an iron square or rectangle) for printing. 19. **bienvenu**—Literally, welcome. By convention, a new workman was supposed to "treat" the workmen already employed, among whom he entered. 23. **sorts**—type distributed in the compositor's box. 24. **matter**—type set up for printing. 25. **ever**—Franklin wrote *ever*, then wrote *always*, and failed to cross out *always*. 41. **riggite**—This word is apparently found only in the *Autobiography*.



constant attendance, (I never making a St. Monday), recommended me to the master; and my uncommon quickness at composing, occasion'd my being put upon all work of dispatch which was generally better paid. So I went on now very agreeably.—

- 5 My lodging in Little Britain being too remote, I found another in Duke-street, opposite to the Romish Chapel. It was two pair of stairs backwards at an Italian warehouse. A widow lady kept the house; she had a daughter and a maid servant, and a journey-man who attended the warehouse, but lodg'd abroad. After sending to enquire my character at the house where I last lodg'd, 10 she agreed to take me in at the same rate 3/6 p[er] week, cheaper as she said from the protection she expected in having a man lodge in the house. She was a widow, an elderly woman, had been bred a Protestant, being a clergyman's daughter, but was converted to the Catholic religion by her husband, whose memory she much revered[;] had lived much among people of distinction, and 15 knew a 1000 [sic] anecdotes of them as far back as the times of Charles the Second. She was lame in her knees with the gout, and therefore seldom stirr'd out of her room, so sometimes wanted company; and hers was so highly amusing to me; that I was sure to spend an evening with her whenever she desired it. Our supper was only half an anchovy each, on a very little strip of bread 20 and butter, and half a pint of ale between us. But the entertainment was in her conversation. My always keeping good hours, and giving little trouble in the family, made her unwilling to part with me; so that when I talk'd of a lodging I had heard of, nearer my business, for 2/ a week, which, intent as I now was on saving money, made some difference, she bid me not think of it, for 25 she would abate me two shillings a week for the future, so I remain'd with her at 1/6 as long as I staid in London.

- In a garret of her house there lived a maiden lady of 70 in the most retired manner, of whom my landlady gave me this account, that she was a Roman Catholic, had been sent abroad when young, and lodg'd in a nunnery with an 30 intent of becoming a nun: but the country not agreeing with her, she return'd to England, where there being no nunnery, she had vow'd to lead the life of a nun as near as might be done in those circumstances: Accordingly she had given all her estate to charitable uses, reserving only twelve pounds a year to live on, and out of this sum she still gave a great deal in charity, living herself 35 on watergruel only, and using no fire but to boil it.—She had lived many years in that garret, being permitted to remain there gratis by successive Catholic tenants of the house below, as they deem'd it a blessing to have her there. A priest visited her, to confess her every day. I have ask'd her, says my landlady, how she, as she liv'd, could possibly find so much employment for 40 a confessor? O, said she, it is impossible to avoid *vain thoughts*. I was permitted once to visit her: She was chearful and polite, and convers'd pleasantly. The room was clean, but had no other furniture than a matras, a table with a crucifix and book, a stool, which she gave me to sit on, and a picture over the chimney of St. *Veronica*, displaying her handkerchief with the miraculous

1. **St. Monday**—that is, holiday, due to drunkenness over the week-end. 5. **Duke-street**—Duke Street leads into Lincoln's Inn Fields. 6. The **Romish Chapel** is the Sardinian Chapel, built in 1648.

figure of Christ's bleeding face on it, which she explain'd to me with great seriousness. She look'd pale, but was never sick, and I give it as another instance on how small an income life and health may be supported.

At Watts's printinghouse I contracted an acquaintance with an ingenious young man, one Wygate, who having wealthy relations, had been better educated than most printers was a tolerable Latinist, spoke French, and lov'd reading. I taught him and a friend of his, to swim, at twice going into the river, and they soon became good swimmers. They introduc'd me to some gentlemen from the country who went to Chelsea by water to see the college and Don Saltero's curiosities. In our return, at the request of the company, whose curiosity Wygate had excited, I stript and leapt into the river, and swam from near Chelsea to Blackfryars, performing on the way many feats of activity both upon and under water, that surpriz'd and pleas'd those to whom they were novelties.—I had from a child been ever delighted with this exercise, had studied and practis'd all Thevenot's motions and positions, added some of my own, aiming at the graceful and easy, as well as the useful. All these I took this occasion of exhibiting to the company, and was much flatter'd by their admiration.—And Wygate, who was desirous of becoming a master, grew more and more attach'd to me, on that account, as well as from the similarity of our studies. He at length propos'd to me travelling all over Europe together, supporting ourselves everywhere by working at our business. I was once inclin'd to it. But mentioning it to my good friend Mr. Denham, with whom I often spent an hour, when I had leisure, he dissuaded me from it, advising me to think only of returning to Pensilvania, which he was now about to do.

I must record one trait of this good man's character. He had formerly been in business at Bristol, but fail'd in debt to a number of people, compounded and went to America. There, by a close application to business as a merchant, he acquir'd a plentiful fortune in a few years. Returning to England in the ship with me, he invited his old creditors to an entertainment, at which he thank'd them for the easy composition they had favour'd him with, and when they expected nothing but the treat, every man at the first remove, found under his plate an order on a banker for the full amount of the unpaid remainder with interest.

He now told me he was about to return to Philadelphia, and should carry over a great quantity of goods in order to open a store there: He propos'd to take me over as his clerk, to keep his books (in which he would instruct me) copy his letters, and attend the store. He added, that as soon as I should be acquainted with mercantile business he would promote me by sending me with a cargo of flour and bread etc to the West Indies, and procure me commissions from others which would be profitable; and if I manag'd well, would establish

9. college—Chelsea College was commenced under James I to "maintain fellows in holy orders," but failed of its object, and was given by Charles II to the newly established Royal Society. In 1681-1682 this organization sold the property to Sir Stephen Fox as a site for the Chelsea Hospital for disabled soldiers, the building being completed under William and Mary. 9. Don Saltero—James Salter, nicknamed Don Saltero, "a sage of a thin and meagre countenance," established a coffeehouse and museum in Cheyne Walk, much patronized by scientists and literary men of the day. The dates of his birth and death are unknown. 15. Thevenot's—Melchissédéch Thévenot (1620-1692). In 1695 appeared his *L'art de nager*, illustrated with diagrams of "motions and positions."

me handsomely. The thing pleas'd me, for I was grown tired of London, remember'd with pleasure the happy months I had spent in Pennsylvania, and wish'd again to see it. Therefore I immediately agreed, on the terms of fifty pounds a year, Pennsylvania money; less indeed than my present gettings as a

5 compositor, but affording a better prospect.—

I now took leave of printing; as I thought, for ever, and was daily employ'd in my new business; going about with Mr. Denham among the tradesmen, to purchase various articles, and seeing them pack'd up, doing errands, calling upon workmen to dispatch, etc. and, when all was on board, I had a few days  
10 leisure. On one of these days I was to my surprise sent for by a great man I knew only by name, a Sir William Wyndham, and I waited upon him. He had heard by some means or other of my swimming from Chelsey to Black-fryars, and of my teaching Wygate and another young man to swim in a few hours. He had two sons, about to set out on their travels; he wish'd to have  
15 them first taught swimming; and propos'd to gratify me handsomely if I would teach them.—They were not yet come to town and my stay was uncertain, so I could not undertake it. But from this incident I thought it likely, that if I were to remain in England and open a swimming school, I might get a good deal of money. And it struck me so strongly, that had the overture been sooner  
20 made me, probably I should not so soon have returned to America.—After many years, you and I had something of more importance to do with one of these sons of Sir William Wyndham, become Earl of Egremont, which I shall mention in its place.—

Thus I spent about 18 months in London. Most part of the time, I work'd  
25 hard at my business, and spent but little upon myself except in seeing plays, and in books.—My friend Ralph had kept me poor. He owed me about 27 pounds, which I was now never likely to receive; a great sum out of my small earnings. I lov'd him notwithstanding, for he had many amiable qualities.—I had by no means improv'd my fortune. But I had pick'd up some very  
30 ingenious acquaintance whose conversation was of great advantage to me, and I had read considerably.

We sail'd from Gravesend on the 23<sup>d</sup> of July 1726. For the incidents of the voyage, I refer you to my Journal, where you will find them all minutely related. Perhaps the most important part of that journal is the *plan* to be found in  
35 it which I formed at sea, for regulating my future conduct in life. It is the more remarkable, as being form'd when I was so young, and yet being pretty faithfully adhered to quite thro' to old age.—We landed in Philadelphia the 11<sup>th</sup> of October, where I found sundry alterations. Keith was no longer governor, being superseded by Major Gordon: I met him walking the streets as a com-  
40 mon citizen. He seem'd a little asham'd at seeing me, but pass'd without saying any thing. I should have been as much asham'd at seeing Miss Read, had not

11. **Sir William Wyndham**—Sir William Wyndham (1687-1740) was a distinguished Tory politician, a disciple of Bolingbroke. 22. **Egremont**—This was Sir Charles Wyndham, second Earl of Egremont (1710-1763), but Franklin did not fulfill his promise to "mention in its place" his relations with this nobleman. 33. **Journal**—Franklin's *Journal* may be read in the Smyth edition of his *Writings*, Vol. II, pp. 53-86. The printed *Journal* contains, however, nothing of the "plan" he mentions. 39. **Major Gordon**—Patrick Gordon (1644-1736), governor of Pennsylvania from 1726 to his death.

her fr<sup>ds</sup>, despairing with reason of my return after the receipt of my letter, persuaded her to marry another, one Rogers, a potter, which was done in my absence. With him however she was never happy, and soon parted from him, refusing to cohabit with him, or bear his name[, ] it being now said that he had another wife. He was a worthless fellow tho' an excellent workman[, ] which 5 was the temptation to her friends. He got into debt, ran away in 1727 or 28. went to the West Indies, and died there. Keimer had got a better house, a shop well supply'd with stationary, plenty of new types, a number of hands tho' none good, and seem'd to have a great deal of business.

Mr. Denham took a store in Water street, where we open'd our goods. I 10 attended the business diligently, studied accounts, and grew in a little time expert at selling. We lodg'd and boarded together; he counsell'd me as a father, having a sincere regard for me: I respected and lov'd him: and we might have gone on together very happily: But in the beginning of Feb<sup>r</sup>, 1727<sup>9</sup> which I had just pass'd my 21<sup>st</sup> year, we both were taken ill. My distemper was a pleurisy, 15 which very nearly carried me off:—I suffered a good deal, gave up the point in my own mind, and was rather disappointed when I found myself recovering; regretting in some degree that I must now some time or other have all that disagreeable work to do over again.—I forget what his distemper was. It held him a long time, and at length carried him off. He left me a small legacy 20 in a nuncupative will, as a token of his kindness for me, and he left me once more to the wide world. For the store was taken into the care of his executors, and my employment under him ended:—My brother-in-law Holmes, being now at Philadelphia, advised my return to my business. And Keimer tempted me with an offer of large wages by the year to come and take the management 25 of his printing-house, that he might better attend his stationer's shop.—I had heard a bad character of him in London from his wife and her friends, and was not fond of having any more to do with him. I try'd for farther employment as a merchant's clerk; but not readily meeting with any, I clos'd again with Keimer. 30

I found in *his* house these hands; Hugh Meredith a Welsh Pensilvanian, 30 years of age, bred to country work; honest, sensible, had a great deal of solid observation, was something of a reader, but given to drink: Stephen Potts, a young countryman of full age, bred to the same: of uncommon natural parts, and great wit and humour, but a little idle. These he had agreed with at ex- 35 tremam low wages, p[er] week, to be rais'd a shilling every 3 months, as they would deserve by improving in their business, and the expectation of these high wages to come on hereafter was what he had drawn them in with. Meredith was to work at press, Potts at bookbinding, which he by agreement, was to teach them, tho' he knew neither one nor t'other. John —, a wild Irishman 40 brought up to no business, whose service, for 4 years Keimer had purchas'd from the captain of a ship. He too was to be made a pressman. George Webb, an Oxford scholar, whose time for 4 years he had likewise bought, intending

31. **Hugh Meredith**—Almost all that is known of the various persons Franklin here enumerates is given by Franklin himself. The only one rising into literary eminence of a sort is George Webb, author of *Batchelor-Hall: A Poem* (of twelve pages) published by Franklin and Meredith in 1731.

him for a compositor, of whom more presently: And David Harry, a country boy, whom he had taken apprentice. I soon perceiv'd that the intention of engaging me at wages so much higher than he had been us'd to give, was to have these raw cheap hands form'd thro' me, and as soon as I had instructed them, then, they being all articulated to him, he should be able to do without me.—I went on however, very chearfully; put his printing house in order, which had been in great confusion, and brought his hands by degrees to mind their business and to do it better.

It was an odd thing to find an Oxford scholar in the situation of a bought servant. He was not more than 18 years of age, and gave me this account of himself; that he was born in Gloucester, educated at a grammar school there, had been distinguish'd among the scholars for some apparent superiority in performing his part, when they exhibited plays; belong'd to the Witty Club there, and had written some pieces in prose and verse, which were printed in the Gloucester newspapers. Thence he was sent to Oxford; where he continu'd about a year, but not well satisfy'd, wishing of all things to see London and become a player. At length receiving his quarterly allowance of 15 guineas, instead of discharging his debts he walk'd out of town, hid his gown in a furz bush, and footed it to London, where having no friend to advise him, he fell into bad company, soon spent his guineas, found no means of being introduc'd among the players, grew necessitous, pawn'd his cloaths and wanted bread. Walking the street very hungry, and not knowing what to do with himself, a crimps bill was put into his hand, offering immediate entertainment and encouragement to such as would bind themselves to serve in America. He went directly, sign'd the indentures, was put into the ship and came over; never writing a line to acquaint his friends what was become of him. He was lively, witty, good-natur'd, and a pleasant companion, but idle, thoughtless and imprudent to the last degree.

John the Irishman soon ran away. With the rest I began to live very agreeably; for they all respected me, the more as they found Keimer incapable of instructing them, and that from me they learnt something daily. We never work'd on a Saturday, that being Keimer's Sabbath. So I had two days for reading. My acquaintance with ingenious people in the town, increased. Keimer himself treated me with great civility, and apparent regard; and nothing now made me uneasy but my debt to Vernon, which I was yet unable to pay being hitherto but a poor œconomist. He however kindly made no demand of it.

Our printing-house often wanted sorts, and there was no letter founder in America. I had seen types cast at James's in London, but without much attention to the manner: However I now contriv'd a mould, made use of the letters we had, as puncheons, struck the matrices in lead, and thus supply'd in a pretty tolerable way all deficiencies. I also engrav'd several things on occasion. I made the ink, I was warehouse-man, and every thing, in short, quite a factotum.

But however serviceable I might be, I found that my services became every

**24. bind themselves**—Poor immigrants, in return for transportation to America, sometimes contracted with sea captains to serve whomsoever the captain would sell them to, for a fixed term of years. **36. œconomist**—economist, manager. **39-40. mould . . . puncheons . . . matrices**—Franklin, using the type he had as punches, "cut" impressions of the letters by striking them into the lead held by the mold; from the matrices so produced he then cast type.

day of less importance, as the other hands improv'd in the business. And when Keimer paid my second quarter's wages, he let me know that he felt them too heavy, and thought I should make an abatement. He grew by degrees less civil, put on more of the master, frequently found fault, was captious, and seem'd ready for an outbreking. I went on nevertheless with a good deal of patience, thinking that his incumber'd circumstances were partly the cause. At length a trifle snapt our connexion. For a great noise happening near the courthouse, I put my head out of the window to see what was the matter. Keimer being in the street look'd up and saw me, call'd out to me in a loud voice and angry tone to mind my business, adding some reproachful words, that nettled me the more for their publicity, all the neighbours who were looking out on the same occasion being witnesses how I was treated. He came up immediately into the printing-house, continu'd the quarrel, high words pass'd on both sides, he gave me the quarter's warning we had stipulated, expressing a wish that he had not been oblig'd to so long a warning: I told him his wish was unnecessary for I would leave him that instant; and so taking my hat walk'd out of doors; desiring Meredith whom I saw below to take care of some things I left, and bring them to my lodging.—

Meredith came accordingly in the evening, when we talked my affair over. He had conceiv'd a great regard for me, and was very unwilling that I should leave the house while he remain'd in it. He dissuaded me from returning to my native country which I began to think of. He reminded me that Keimer was in debt for all he possess'd, that his creditors began to be uneasy, that he kept his shop miserably, sold often without profit for ready money, and often trusted without keeping accounts. That he must therefore fail; which would make a vacancy I might profit of.—I objected my want of money. He then let me know that, his father had a high opinion of me, and from some discourse that had pass'd between them, he was sure would advance money to set us up, if I would enter into partnership with him. My time, says he, will be out with Keimer in the spring. By that time we may have our press and types in from London. I am sensible I am no workman. If you like it, your skill in the business shall be set against the stock I furnish; and we will share the profits equally.—The proposal was agreeable, and I consented. His father was in town and approv'd of it, the more as he saw I had great influence with his son, had prevail'd on him to abstain long from dramdrinking, and he hop'd might break him of that wretched habit entirely, when we came to be so closely connected. I gave an inventory to the father, who carry'd it to a merchant; the things were sent for; the secret was to be kept till they should arrive, and in the mean time I was to get work if I could at the other printing-house. But I found no vacancy there, and so remain'd idle a few days, when Keimer, on a prospect of being employ'd to print some paper-money, in New Jersey, which would require cuts and various types that I only could supply, and apprehending Bradford might engage me and get the jobb from him, sent me a very civil message, that old friends should not part for a few words the effect of sudden passion, and wishing me to return. Meredith persuaded me to comply, as it would give more opportunity for his improvement under my daily instructions.—So I return'd, and we went on more smoothly than for some time

before. The New Jersey jobb was obtained. I contriv'd a copper-plate press for it, the first that had been seen in the country. I cut several ornaments and checks for the bills. We went together to Burlington, where I executed the whole to satisfaction, and he received so large a sum for the work, as to be enabled  
5 thereby to keep his head much longer above water.

At Burlington I made an acquaintance with many principal people of the province. Several of them had been appointed by the assembly a committee to attend the press, and take care that no more bills were printed than the law directed. They were therefore by turns constantly with us, and generally he  
10 who attended brought with him a friend or two for company. My mind having been much more improv'd by reading than Keimer's, I suppose it was for that reason my conversation seem'd to be more valu'd. They had me to their houses, introduc'd me to their friends and show'd me much civility, while he, tho' the master, was a little neglected. In truth he was an odd fish, ignorant of common  
15 life, fond of rudely opposing receiv'd opinions, slovenly to extream dirtiness, enthusiastic in some points of religion, and a little knavish withal. We continu'd there near 3 months, and by that time I could reckon among my acquired friends, Judge Allen, Samuel Bustill, the secretary of the Province, Isaac Pearson, Joseph Cooper, and several of the Smiths, members of Assembly, and  
20 Isaac Decow the surveyor-general. The latter was a shrewd sagacious old man, who told me that he began for himself when young by wheeling clay for the brickmakers, learnt to write after he was of age, carry'd the chain for surveyors, who taught him surveying, and he had now by his industry, acquir'd a good estate; and says he, I foresee, that you will soon work this man out of his busi-  
25 ness and make a fortune in it at Philadelphia. He had not then the least intimation of my intention to set up there or any where. These friends were afterwards of great use to me, as I occasionally was to some of them. They all continued their regard for me as long as they lived.—

Before I enter upon my public appearance in business it may be well to let  
30 you know the then state of my mind, with regard to my principles and morals, that you may see how far those influenc'd the future events of my life. My parent's [sic] had early given me religious impressions, and brought me through my childhood piously in the dissenting way. But I was scarce 15 when, after doubting by turns of several points as I found them disputed in the different  
35 books I read, I began to doubt of revelation itself. Some books against deism fell into my hands; they were said to be the substance of sermons preached at Boyle's Lectures. It happened that they wrought an effect on me quite contrary

**1. copper-plate press**—Printing from copperplates required a special press, the ordinary printing press (then and now) not being proper for the purpose. **2. checks**—In one sense of the term, a check for such a money bill is the counterfoil or "stub" of record, kept after the bill is issued. Whether this is Franklin's meaning is not certain. **3. Burlington**—During the eighteenth century Burlington was one of the two capitals of the "Jerseys," or New Jersey. **18-20. Judge Allen . . . Isaac Decow**—The best known of these colonial worthies is William Allen (1704-1780), whose judicial career extended from 1737 to 1774. **Bustill** sometimes appears as "Bustall," and **Decow** in its proper French form of "de Cou." The Smiths were a family powerful in social and political life, to whom a special volume, *The Burlington Smiths*, has been devoted. The special student can track down most of Franklin's acquaintances in the New Jersey archives. **37. Boyle's Lectures**—Robert Boyle (1627-1691) left a sum of money to establish a course of lectures defending Christianity against infidels and skeptics. The first lectures were given in 1692.

to what was intended by them: For the arguments of the deists, which were quoted to be refuted, appeared to me much stronger than the refutations. In short I soon became a thorough deist. My arguments perverted some others, particularly Collins and Ralph: but each of them having afterwards wrong'd me greatly without the least compunction, and recollecting Keith's conduct towards me, (who was another freethinker) and my own towards Vernon and Miss Read, which at times gave me great trouble, I began to suspect that this doctrine, tho' it might be true, was not very useful.—My London pamphlet, which had for its motto these lines of Dryden

Whatever is, is right. Tho' purblind man  
Sees but a part of the chain, the nearest link,  
His eyes not carrying to the equal beam,  
That poises all, above. 10

And from the attributes of God, his infinite wisdom, goodness and power concluded that nothing could possibly be wrong in the world, and that vice and virtue were empty distinctions, no such things existing: appear'd now not so clever a performance as I once thought it; and I doubted whether some error had not insinuated itself unperceiv'd, into my argument, so as to infect all that follow'd, as is common in metaphysical reasonings.—I grew convinc'd that *truth, sincerity and integrity* in dealings between man and man, were of the utmost importance to the felicity of life, and I form'd written resolutions, (w<sup>ch</sup> still remain in my journal book) to practice them everwhile I lived. Revelation had indeed no weight with me as such; but I entertain'd an opinion that tho' certain actions might not be bad *because* they were forbidden by it, or good *because* it commanded them, yet probably those actions might be forbidden *because* they were bad for us, or commanded *because* they were beneficial to us, in their own natures, all the circumstances of things considered. And this persuasion, with the kind hand of Providence, or some guardian angel, or accidental favourable circumstances and situations, or all together, preserved me, (thro' this dangerous time of youth and the hazardous situations I was sometimes in among strangers, remote from the eye and advice of my father) without any *wilful* gross immorality or injustice that might have been expected from my want of religion. I say *wilful*, because the instances I have mentioned, had something of *necessity* in them, from my youth, inexperience, and the knavery of others. I had therefore a tolerable character to begin the world with, I valued it properly, and determin'd to preserve it. 35

We had not been long return'd to Philadelphia, before the new types arriv'd

10-13. **Whatever is**—Franklin is quoting from memory. The passage as given on the title page of his pamphlet is more nearly like the original, which runs:

“Whatever is, is in it's causes just;  
Since all things are by Fate. But pur-blind Man  
Sees but a part o' th' Chain; the nearest links;  
His eyes not carrying to that equal Beam  
That poizes all above.”

—Dryden and Lee, *Oedipus*, London,  
1679, Act III, Scene 2, p. 37.

21. **written resolutions**—Cf. *Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion*, already referred to; and see *Writings*, Vol. I, pp. 327 ff



from London. We settled with Keimer, and left him by his consent before he heard of it.—We found a house to hire near the market, and took it. To lessen the rent, (which was then but 24£ a year tho' I have since known it to let for 70) we took in Thomas Godfrey a glazier, and his family, who were to  
 5 pay a considerable part of it to us, and we to board with them. We had scarce opened our letters and put our press in order, before George House, an acquaintance of mine, brought a countryman to us; whom he had met in the street enquiring for a printer. All our cash was now expended in the variety  
 10 of particulars we had been obliged to procure, and this countryman's five shillings, being our first fruits and coming so seasonably, gave me more pleasure than any crown I have since earned; and the gratitude I felt toward House, has made me often more ready than perhaps I should otherwise have been, to assist young beginners.

There are croakers in every country always boding its ruin. Such a one then  
 15 lived in Philadelphia, a person of note, an elderly man, with a wise look and very grave manner of speaking. His name was Samuel Mickle. This gentleman, a stranger to me, stopt one day at my door, and asked me if I was the young man who had lately opened a new printing house. Being answer'd in the affirmative, he said he was sorry for me, because it was an expensive undertaking, and the expense would be lost, for Philadelphia was a sinking place, the  
 20 people already half bankrupts, or near being so; all appearances to the contrary such as new buildings, and the rise of rents being to his certain knowledge fallacious, for they were in fact among the things that would soon ruin us. And he gave me such a detail of misfortunes now existing or that were soon  
 25 to exist, that he left me half melancholy. Had I known him before I engaged in this business, probably I never should have done it. This man continued to live in this decaying place, and to declaim in the same strain, refusing for many years to buy a house there, because all was going to destruction; and at last I had the pleasure of seeing him give five times as much for one as he might have  
 30 bought it for when he first began his croaking.

I should have mentioned before, that in the autumn of the preceeding year, I had form'd most of my ingenious acquaintance into a club for mutual improvement, which we called the *junto*. We met on Friday evening. The rules  
 35 I drew up requir'd that every member in his turn should produce one or more queries on any point of morals, politics or natural philosophy, to be discuss'd by the company, and once in three months produce and read an essay of his own writing on any subject he pleased. Our debates were to be under the direction  
 40 of a president, and to be conducted in the sincere spirit of enquiry after truth, without fondness for dispute, or desire of victory; and to prevent warmth all expressions of positiveness in opinions, or direct contradiction, were after some time made contraband and prohibited under small pecuniary penalties. The first members were Joseph Breintnal, a copyer of deeds for the scriveners, a

11. *crown*—a British coin, worth five shillings. 20. *sinking*—decaying, failing. 33. *junto*—a Spanish word, meaning private cabal, and employed by Franklin to give an atmosphere of secrecy to his club. Franklin's rules are given in *Writings*, Vol. II, pp. 88-90. 42. *Joseph Breintnal*—Most of the members of the *Junto* rose to fame. Joseph Breintnal, of whom curiously little is known, assisted Franklin in the composition of some of his papers, as the student may learn by consulting the index to Franklin's *Writings*. Thomas Godfrey (1704-1749), to whom Franklin

good-natur'd friendly middle-ag'd man, a great lover of poetry, reading all he could meet with, and writing some that was tolerable; very ingenious in many little nicknackeries, and of sensible conversation. Thomas Godfrey, a self-taught mathematician, great in his way, and afterwards inventor of what is now called Hadley's quadrant. But he knew little out of his way, and was not a pleasing companion, as like most great mathematicians I have met with, he expected universal precision in every thing said, or was forever denying or distinguishing upon trifles to the disturbance of all conversation. He soon left us. Nicholas Scull, a surveyor, afterward surveyor-general, who lov'd books, and sometimes made a few verses. William Parsons, bred a shoemaker, but loving reading, had acquir'd a considerable share of mathematics, which he first studied with a view to astrology that he afterwards laugh'd at. He also became surveyor general. William Maugridge, a joiner, a most exquisite mechanic and a solid sensible man. Hugh Meredith, Stephen Potts, and George Webb, I have characteris'd before. Robert Grace, a young gentleman of some fortune, generous, lively and witty, a lover of punning and of his friends. And William Coleman, then a merchant's clerk, about my age, who had the coolest clearest head, the best heart, and the exactest morals, of almost any man I ever met with. He became afterwards a merchant of great note, and one of our provincial judges. Our friendship continued without interruption to his death upwards of 40 years. And the club continu'd almost as long[,] and was the best school of philosophy, and politics that then existed in the province; for our queries which were read the week preceding their discussion, put us on reading with attention upon the several subjects, that we might speak more to the purpose: and here too we acquired better habits of conversation, every thing being studied in our rules which might prevent our disgusting each other. From hence the long continuance of the club, which I shall have frequent occasion to speak farther of hereafter; but my giving this account of it here, is to show something of the interest I had, every one of these exerting themselves in recommending business to us.—Brientnal particularly procur'd us from the Quakers, the printing 40 sheets of their history, the rest being to be done by Keimer: and upon this we work'd exceeding hard, for the price was low. It was a folio, pro patria size, in pica with long primer notes. I compos'd of it a sheet a day, and Meredith work'd it off at press. It was often 11 at night and sometimes later, before I had finish'd my distribution for the next days work:

rented part of his house, besides being the inventor of an improved quadrant, was the father of Thomas Godfrey, Jr., author of *The Prince of Parthia*, the first American tragedy. William Parsons (died 1757) was surveyor general of Pennsylvania from 1743 to 1748, when he was succeeded by Nicholas Scull (born 1700?), who served to 1761, and whose map of Pennsylvania (1759) was notable. Less is known of Robert Grace, but the career of William Coleman is sufficiently indicated in the text.

**31. Quakers . . . their history**—This was William Sewel, *The History of the Rise, Increase, and Progress, Of the Christian People called Quakers: Intermixed with Several Remarkable Occurrences*. . . . The Third Edition, Corrected. Philadelphia: Printed and Sold by Samuel Keimer in Second Street. M DCC XXVIII. **33. folio**—In printing, a folio is a book formed by folding a sheet of paper once. As Franklin printed 40 sheets, he was responsible for 160 pages. The meaning of **pro patria** is obscure; it apparently refers either to the size of the sheet or to that of the printed page. The book in question is 5 7/16" by 10 1/16". **33. pica**—12-point type. **33. long primer**—10-point type. **34. sheet a day**—that is, four pages, two printed on one side of the sheet, and two on the other.

For the little jobbs sent in by our other friends now and then put us back. But so determin'd I was to continue doing a sheet a day of the folio, that one night when having impos'd my forms, I thought my days work over, one of them by accident was broken and two pages reduc'd to pie, I immediately  
 5 distributed and compos'd it over again before I went to bed. And this industry visible to our neighbours began to give us character and credit; particularly I was told, that mention being made of the new printing office at the merchants every-night club, the general opinion was that it must fail, there being already  
 10 two printers in the place, Keimer and Bradford; but Doctor Baird (whom you and I saw many years after at his native place, St. Andrews in Scotland) gave a contrary opinion; for the industry of that Franklin, says he, is superior to any thing I ever saw of the kind. I see him still at work when I go home from club; and he is at work again before his neighbours are out of bed. This struck the rest, and we soon after had offers from one of them to supply us with  
 15 stationary. But as yet we did not chuse to engage in shop business.

I mention this industry the more particularly and the more freely, tho' it seems to be talking in my own praise, that those of my posterity who shall read it, may know the use of that virtue, when they see its effects in my favour throughout this relation.—

20 George Webb, who had found a friend that lent him wherewith to purchase his time of Keimer, now came to offer himself as a journeyman to us. We could not then employ him, but foolishly I let him know, as a secret, that I soon intended to begin a newspaper, and might then have work for him. My hopes of success as I told him were founded on this, that the then only news-  
 25 paper, printed by Bradford was a paltry thing, wretchedly manag'd, no way entertaining; and yet was profitable to him.—I therefore thought a good paper could scarcely fail of good encouragem<sup>t</sup>. I requested Webb not to mention it, but he told it to Keimer, who immediately, to be beforehand with me, published proposals for printing one himself, on which Webb was to be employ'd.—I resented this, and to counteract them, as I could not yet begin our  
 30 paper, I wrote several pieces of entertainment for Bradford's paper under the title of the Busy Body, which Brient[n]al continu'd some months. By this means the attention of the publick was fix'd on that paper, and Keimers proposals which we burlesqu'd and ridicul'd, were disregarded. He began his paper  
 35 however, and after carrying it on three quarters of a year, with at most only 90 subscribers, he offer'd it to me for a trifle, and I having been ready some time to go on with it, took it in hand directly, and it prov'd in a few years ex-  
 tremely profitable to me.

3. impos'd my forms—that is, he “made up” his forms—locked the type into a form or forme, ready for printing, an operation requiring considerable skill. 4. reduc'd to pie—more commonly, pi. The type fell out of the form and into complete confusion. Franklin therefore had to distribute the pied type into the cases and recompose the two pages. 9. Doctor Baird—This man has usually been identified with Dr. John Bard, the famous Philadelphia physician, but as he was born in 1716 he would scarcely be a member of a merchants' club in 1728. 24-25. only newspaper—The *American Weekly Mercury*, founded in 1719. 29. printing one—*The Universal Instructor in All Arts and Sciences and Pennsylvania Gazette*, the first number appearing Dec. 24, 1738. Keimer printed *The Universal Instructor* through the thirty-ninth number. 32. Busy Body—For *The Busy-Body* papers, consult Franklin's *Writings*, Vol. II. 37. took it in hand—Franklin shortened the title to *The Pennsylvania Gazette*. The first number to be printed under

I perceive that I am apt to speak in the singular number, though our partnership still continu'd. The reason may be, that in fact the whole management of the business lay upon me. Meredith was no compositor, a poor pressman, and seldom sober. My friends lamented my connection with him, but I was to make the best of it.

Our first papers made a quite different appearance from any before in the province, a better type and better printed: but some spirited remarks of my writing on the dispute then going on between Gov<sup>r</sup> Burnet and the Massachusetts Assembly, struck the principal people, occasion'd the paper and the manager of it to be much talk'd of, and in a few weeks brought them all to be our subscribers. Their example was follow'd by many, and our number went on growing continually.—This was one of the first good effects of my having learnt a little to scribble. Another was, that the leading men, seeing a news paper now in the hands of one who could also handle a pen, thought it convenient to oblige and encourage me. Bradford still printed the votes and laws and other publick business. He had printed an address of the house to the governor in a coarse blundering manner; we reprinted it elegantly and correctly, and sent one to every member. They were sensible of the difference, it strengthen'd the hands of our friends in the house, and they voted us their printers for the year ensuing.

Among my friends in the house I must not forget Mr. Hamilton before mentioned, who was then returned from England and had a seat in it. He interested himself for me strongly in that instance, as he did in many others afterwards, continuing his patronage till his death. Mr. Vernon about this time put me in mind of the debt I ow'd him: but did not press me. I wrote him an ingenuous letter of acknowledgments, crav'd his forbearance a little longer which he allow'd me, and as soon as I was able I paid the principal with interest and many thanks.—So that erratum was in some degree corrected.

But now another difficulty came upon me, which I had never the least reason to expect. Mr. Meredith's father, who was to have paid for our printing house according to the expectations given me, was able to advance only one hundred pounds, currency, which had been paid, and a hundred more was due to the merchant; who grew impatient and su'd us all. We gave bail, but saw that if the money could not be rais'd in time, the suit must come to a judgment and execution, and our hopeful prospects must with us be ruined, as the press and letters must be sold for payment, perhaps at half price.—In this distress two true friends whose kindness I have never forgotten nor ever shall forget while

his direction was dated Sept. 25-Oct. 2, 1729. An announcement says that "no Care and Pains shall be omitted, that may make the *Pennsylvania Gazette* as agreeable and useful an Entertainment as the Nature of the Thing will allow."

7. printed:—After printed, Franklin's manuscript has: "Insert these Remarks, in a note.—"

8. Burnet—William Burnet was transferred from the governorship of New York to that of Massachusetts Bay on Apr. 15, 1728. A warm discussion broke out between the Governor and the Assembly as to the amount and manner of payment of the governor's salary, the Assembly desiring to control the governor. Franklin's "remarks" are not reprinted in his works. 22. then—Franklin first wrote *now*, then wrote *then* above the line, but failed to cross out *now*. 24. death—Franklin wrote on the margin the note: "I got his son once 500 £." 34-35. judgment and execution—that is, would get into court, when the sheriff would be instructed to seize and sell the property for the creditor.

I can remember any thing, came to me separately[,] unknown to each other, and without any application from me, offering each of them to advance me all the money that should be necessary to enable me to take the whole business upon myself if that should be practicable, but they did not like my continuing  
 5 the partnership with Meredith, who as they said was often seen drunk in the streets, and playing at low games in alehouses, much to our discredit. These two friends were *William Coleman* and *Robert Grace*. I told them I could not propose a separation while any prospect remain'd of the Merediths fulfilling their part of our agreement. Because I thought myself under great obligations  
 10 to them for what they had done and would do if they could. But if they finally fail'd in their performance, and our partnership must be dissolv'd, I should then think myself at liberty to accept the assistance of my friends. Thus the matter rested for some time. When I said to my partner, perhaps your father is dissatisfied at the part you have undertaken in this affair of ours, and is unwilling to advance for you and me what he would for you alone: If that  
 15 is the case, tell me, and I will resign the whole to you and go about my business. No[,] says he, my father has really been disappointed and is really unable; and I am unwilling to distress him farther. I see this is a business I am not fit for. I was bred a farmer, and it was a folly in me to come to town and put myself at 30 years of age an apprentice to learn a new trade. Many of our Welsh people are going to settle in North Carolina where land is cheap: I am inclin'd to go with them, and following my old employment. You may find friends to assist you. If you will take the debts of the company upon you, return to my father the hundred pound he has advanc'd, pay my little personal  
 20 debts, and give me thirty pounds and a new saddle, I will relinquish the partnership and leave the whole in your hands. I agreed to this proposal. It was drawn up in writing, sign'd and seal'd immediately. I gave him what he demanded and he went soon after to Carolina; from whence he sent me next year two long letters, containing the best account that had been given of that  
 25 country, the climate, soil, husbandry, etc. for in those matters he was very judicious. I printed them in the papers, and they gave grate satisfaction to the publick.

As soon as he was gone, I recurr'd to my two friends; and because I would not give an unkind preference to either, I took half what each had offered and  
 35 I wanted, of one, and half of the other; paid off the company debts, and went on with the business in my own name, advertising that the partnership was dissolved. I think this was in or about the year 1729.—

About this time there was a cry among the people for more paper-money, only 15,000 £ being extant in the province and that soon to be sunk. The  
 40 wealthy inhabitants oppos'd any addition, being against all paper currency, from an apprehension that it would depreciate as it had done in New England to the prejudice of all creditors.—We had discuss'd this point in our Junto, where I was on the side of an addition, being persuaded that the first small sum struck in 1723 had done much good, by increasing the trade[,] employ-

20-21. *Welsh people*—The "Welsh Tract" of North Carolina lay in New Hanover County, near Wilmington. 37. 1729—Franklin's memory played him false. The partnership ended July 14, 1730.

ment, and number of inhabitants in the province, since I now saw all the old houses inhabited, and many new ones building, where as I remember'd well, that when I first walk'd about the streets of Philadelphia, eating my roll, I saw most of the houses in Walnut street between Second and Front streets with bills on their doors to be let; and many likewise in Chesnut street, and other streets; which made me then think the inhabitants of the city were deserting it, one after another.—Our debates possess'd me so fully of the subject, that I wrote and printed an anonymous pamphlet on it, entituled, *The Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency*. It was well receiv'd by the common people in general; but the rich men dislik'd it; for it increas'd and strengthen'd the clamour for more money; and they happening to have no writers among them that were able to answer it, their opposition slacken'd, and the point was carried by a majority in the house. My friends there, who conceiv'd I had been of some service, thought fit to reward me, by employing me in printing the money, a very profitable jobb, and a great help to me.—This was another advantage gain'd by my being able to write[.] The utility of this currency became by time and experience so evident, as never afterwards to be much disputed, so that it grew soon to 55,000 £, and in 1739 to 80,000 £ since which it arose during war to upwards of 350,000 £. trade, building and inhabitants all the while increasing. Tho' I now think there are limits beyond which the quantity may be hurtful.—

I soon after obtain'd, thro' my friend Hamilton, the printing of the New Castle paper money, another profitable jobb, as I then thought it; small things appearing great to those in small circumstances. And these to me were really great advantages, as they were great encouragements. He procured me also the printing of the laws and votes of that government which continu'd in my hands as long as I follow'd the business.

I now open'd a little stationer's shop. I had in it blanks of all sorts the correctest that ever appear'd among us, being assisted in that by my friend Brientnall; I had also paper, parchment, chapmen's books, etc. One Whitemarsh[,] a compositor I had known in London, an excellent workman now came to me and work'd with me constantly and diligently, and I took an apprentice the son of Aquila Rose. I began now gradually to pay off the debt I was under for the printing-house. In order to secure my credit and character as a tradesman, I took care not only to be in *reality* industrious and frugal, but to avoid all *appearances* of the contrary. I drest plainly; I was seen at no places of idle diversion; I never went out fishing or shooting; a book, indeed, sometimes debauch'd me from my work; but that was seldom, snug, and gave no scandal: and to show that I was not above my business, I sometimes brought home the paper I purchas'd at the stores, thro' the streets on a wheelbarrow. Thus being esteem'd an industrious thriving young man, and paying duly for what I bought, the merchants who imported stationary solicited my custom, others

5. bills—signs, "To Let." 8-9. *Nature . . . Paper Currency*—For *A Modest Inquiry into the Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency*, see *Writings*, Vol. II. 22-23. New Castle—that is, for the "three counties" of Delaware. Although Delaware was for the greater part of the eighteenth century an independent political unit, the governor of Pennsylvania was also the governor of Delaware—a fact which accounts for the relations between the two colonies implicit in Franklin's text.

propos'd supplying me with books, I went on swimmingly. In the mean time Keimer's credit and business declining daily, he was at last forc'd to sell his printing-house to satisfy his creditors. He went to Barbadoes, and there lived some years, in very poor circumstances.

- 5 His apprentice David Harry, whom I had instructed while I work'd with him, set up in his place at Philadelphia, having bought his materials. I was at first apprehensive of a powerful rival in Harry, as his friends were very able, and had a good deal of interest. I therefore propos'd a partnership to him; which he, fortunately for me, rejected with scorn. He was very proud, dress'd  
10 like a gentleman, liv'd expensively, took much diversion and pleasure abroad, ran in debt, and neglected his business, upon which all business left him; and finding nothing to do, he follow'd Keimer to Barbadoes; taking the printing-house with him[.] There this apprentice employ'd his former master as a journeyman. They quarrel'd often, Harry went continually behindhand, and at  
15 length was forc'd to sell his types, and return to his country work in Pensilvania. The person that bought them, employ'd Keimer to use them, but in a few years he died. There remain'd now no competitor with me at Philadelphia, but the old one, Bradford, who was rich and easy, did a little printing now and then by straggling hands, but was not very anxious about it. However, as he  
20 kept the post office, it was imagined he had better opportunities of obtaining news, his paper was thought a better distributor of advertisements than mine, and therefore had many more, which was a profitable thing to him and a disadvantage to me. For tho' I did indeed receive and send papers by post, yet the publick opinion was otherwise; for what I did send was by bribing the  
25 riders who took them privately: Bradford being unkind enough to forbid it: which occasion'd some resentment on my part; and I thought so meanly of him for it, that when I afterwards came into his situation, I took care never to imitate it.

- I had hitherto continu'd to board with Godfrey who lived in part of my  
30 house with his wife and children, and had one side of the shop for his glazier's business, tho' he work'd little, being always absorb'd in his mathematics. Mrs. Godfrey projected a match for me with a relation's daughter, took opportunity of bringing us often together, till a serious courtship on my part ensu'd, the girl being in herself very deserving. The old folks encourag'd me by continual  
35 invitations to supper, and by leaving us together, till at length it was time to explain. Mrs. Godfrey manag'd our little treaty. I let her know that I expected as much money with their daughter as would pay off my remaining debts for the printinghouse, which I believe was not then above a hundred pounds. She brought me word they had no such sum to spare. I said they might mortgage  
40 their house in the loan office. The answer to this after some days was, that they did not approve the match; that on enquiry of Bradford they had been in-

**2. Keimer's**—Keimer seems to have left Philadelphia in 1729. Franklin is not quite fair to his subsequent career. In 1731 he established the *Barbadoes Gazette*, which continued until 1738, and which contained essays of sufficient merit to justify the publication of two volumes selected from the paper as *Caribbeana*, London, 1741. **27. his situation**—Franklin became Deputy Postmaster-General for the Colonies in 1753, this being the only public office for which he ever applied. He then withdrew the privilege of free distribution of newspapers, and charged ninepence a year for each fifty miles of carriage.

form'd the printing business was not a profitable one, the types would soon be worn out and more wanted, that S. Keimer and D. Harry had fail'd one after the other, and I should probably soon follow them; and therefore I was forbidden the house, and the daughter shut up.—Whether this was a real change of sentiment, or only artifice, on a supposition of our being too far engag'd in affection to retract, and therefore that we should steal a marriage, which would leave them at liberty to give or with[h]old what they pleas'd, I know not: But I suspected the latter, resented it, and went no more. Mrs. Godfrey brought me afterwards some more favourable accounts of their disposition, and would have drawn me on again: But I declared absolutely my resolution to have nothing more to do with that family. This was resented by the Godfreys, we differ'd, and they removed, leaving me the whole house, and I resolved to take no more inmates. But this affair having turn'd my thoughts to marriage, I look'd round me, and made overtures of acquaintance in other places; but soon found that the business of a printer being generally thought a poor one, I was not to expect money with a wife unless with such a one, as I should not otherwise think agreeable.—In the mean time, that hard-to-be-govern'd passion of youth, had hurried me frequently into intrigues with low women that fell in my way, which were attended with some expence and great inconvenience, besides a continual risque to my health by a distemper which of all things I dread, tho' by great good luck I escaped it.—

A friendly correspondence as neighbours and old acquaintances, had continued between me and Mrs. Read's family, who all had a regard for me from the time of my first lodging in their house. I was often invited there and consulted in their affairs, wherein I sometimes was of service.—I pity'd poor Miss Read's unfortunate situation, who was generally dejected, seldom chearful, and avoided company. I consider'd my giddiness and inconstancy when in London as in a great degree the cause of her unhappiness; tho' the mother was good enough to think the fault more her own than mine, as she had prevented our marrying before I went thither, and persuaded the other match in my absence. Our mutual affection was revived, but there were now great objections to our union. That match was indeed look'd upon as invalid, a preceeding wife being said to be livin[g] in England; but this could not easily be prov'd, because of the distance[.] And tho' there was a report of his death, it was not certain. The[n] tho' it should be true, he had left many debts which his successor might be call'd [on] to pay. We ventur[']d however, over all these difficulties, and I [took] her to wife Sept. 1. 1730. None of the inconveniencies happen[ed] that we had apprehended, she prov'd a good and faithful helpmate, assisted me much by attending the shop, we throve together, and have ever mutually endeavour'd to make each other happy. Thus I corrected that great *erratum* as wel[1] as I could.

1. not a profitable—"If a Philadelphian in 1728 had been asked to name the business by which, in Philadelphia, a stranger could make a fortune in twenty years, the business of a printer would have been among the very last to occur to him. There was no good bookstore south of Boston, it is true, but also there was no general regard for books south of Boston. . . . The whole business of printing was trivial, and could be made profitable only by prosecuting successfully a great number of petty projects." (James Parton) The statement about regard for books south of Boston is not, however, accurate. 33. livin[g]—The original manuscript has been torn at the edge, and the missing letters in this passage are supplied in brackets.



About [th]is time our club meeting, not at a tavern, but in a little room of Mr. Grace's set apart for that purpose, a proposition was made by me that since our books were often referr'd to in our disquisitions upon the queries, it might be convenient to us to have them all together where we met, that upon occasion  
 5 they might be consulted; and by thus clubbing our books to a common library, we should, while we lik'd to keep them together, have each of us the advantage of using the books of all the other members, which would be nearly as beneficial as if each owned the whole. It was lik'd and agreed to, and we fill'd one  
 10 end of the room with such books as we could best spare. The number was not so great as we expected; and tho' they had been of great use, yet some inconveniencies occurring for want of due care of them, the collection after about a year was separated, and each took his books home again.

And now I sent on foot my first project of a public nature, [th]at for a subscription library. [I] drew up the proposals, got them put into form by our  
 15 great scrivener Brockden, and by the help of my friends in the Junto, procur'd fifty subscribers of 40/ each to begin with and 10/ a year for 50 years, the term our company was to continue. We afterwards obtain'd a charter, the company being increas'd to 100. This was the mother of all the N American subscription libraries now so numerous, is become a great thing itself, and continually in-  
 20 creasing.—These libraries have improv'd the general conversation of the Americans, made the common tradesmen and farmers as intelligent as most gentlemen from other countries, and perhaps have contributed in some degree to the stand so generally made throughout the colonies in defence of their privileges.—

## A SECOND DIALOGUE BETWEEN PHILOCLES AND HORATIO, CONCERNING VIRTUE AND PLEASURE

The era of Sir Robert Walpole, following the great "world war" of Queen Anne's reign, was marked by much cynicism and profligacy. In a desire to combat the "epicurean" philosophy which he feared might creep into America, Franklin published in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* for June 23 and July 9, 1730, two dialogues between Philocles, who represents Franklin's moral philosophy, and Horatio, a professed libertine. The drift of the first of these may be gathered from the second, which is here reprinted, Franklin's capitalization being modernized. We are to assume that the two speakers are walking through the countryside on their way to Philadelphia.

25 *Philocles.* Dear *Horatio!* where hast thou been these three or four months? What new adventures have you fallen upon since I met you in these delightful, all-inspiring fields, and wondred how such a pleasure-hunter as you could bear being alone?

14. library—The Philadelphia Library was established in 1731. 20. conversation—here about equivalent to "general information" rather than "talk." 24. privileges—Franklin's manuscript has in the margin the note: "My manner of asking to engage people in this and future undertakings." In the next portion of the *Autobiography*, written in 1784, he explains how he solicited subscriptions. See *Writings*, Vol. I, pp. 322-23.

*Horatio.* O *Philocles*, thou best of friends, because a friend to reason and virtue, I am very glad to see you. Don't you remember, I told you then, that some misfortunes in my pleasures had sent me to philosophy for relief? But now I do assure you, I can, without a sigh, leave other pleasures for those of philosophy; I can hear the word *reason* mentioned, and virtue praised, without laughing. Don't I bid fair for conversion, think you? 5

*Phil.* Very fair, *Horatio*! for I remember the time when reason, virtue, and pleasure, were the same thing with you: when you counted nothing good but what pleas'd, nor any thing reasonable, but what you got by; when you made a jest of a mind, and the pleasures of reflection, and elegantly plac'd your sole happiness, like the rest of the animal creation, in the gratifications of sense. 10

*Hor.* I did so; but in our last conversation, when walking upon the brow of this hill, and looking down on that broad, rapid river, and yon widely-extended beautifully-varied plain, you taught me another doctrine: you shewed me, that self-denial, which above all things I abhorred, was really the greatest good, and the highest self-gratification, and absolutely necessary to produce even my own darling sole good, pleasure. 15

*Phil.* True: I told you that self-denial was never a duty but when it was a natural means of procuring more pleasure than we could taste without it: that as we all strongly desire to live, and to live only to enjoy, we should take as much care about our future as our present happiness; and not build one upon the ruins of t'other: that we should look to the end, and regard consequences: and if, thro' want of attention we had err'd, and exceeded the bounds which nature had set us, we were then obliged, for our own sakes, to refrain or deny ourselves a present momentary pleasure for a future, constant, and durable good. 20 25

*Hor.* You have shewn me, *Philocles*, that self-denial, which weak or interested men have rendred the most forbidding, is really the most delightful and amiable, the most reasonable and pleasant thing in the world. In a word, if I understand you aright, self-denial is, in truth, self-recognising, self-acknowledging, or self-owning. But now, my friend! you are to perform another promise; and shew me the path which leads up to that constant, durable, and invariable good, which I have heard you so beautifully describe, and which you seem so fully to possess: is not this good of yours a mere chimera? Can any thing be constant in a world which is eternally changing! and which appears to exist by an everlasting revolution of one thing into another, and where every thing without us, and every thing within us, is in perpetual motion? What is this constant, durable good, then, of yours? Prithee, satisfy my soul, for I'm all on fire, and impatient to enjoy her. Produce this eternal blooming goddess with never-fading charms, and see, whether I won't embrace her with as much eagerness and rapture as you. 30 35 40

*Phil.* You seem enthusiastically warm, *Horatio*; I will wait till you are cool enough to attend to the sober, dispassionate voice of reason.

*Hor.* You mistake me, my dear *Philocles*! My warmth is not so great as to

9. got by—profited by. 42. enthusiastically—In the first half of the eighteenth century, enthusiasm, connoting the negation of reason, was viewed as something to be shunned. "Enthusiast" was at first tantamount to "fanatic" as a term of reproach.

run away with my reason: it is only just raised enough to open my faculties, and fit them to receive those eternal truths, and that durable good, which you so triumphantly boasted of. Begin, then; I'm prepared.

*Phil.* I will. I believe, *Horatio!* with all your scepticism about you, you will  
5 allow that good to be constant which is never absent from you, and that to be durable, which never ends but with your being.

*Hor.* Yes, go on.

*Phil.* That can never be the good of a creature, which when present, the creature may be miserable, and when absent, is certainly so.

10 *Hor.* I think not; but pray explain what you mean; for I am not much used to this abstract way of reasoning.

*Phil.* I mean all the pleasures of sense. The good of man cannot consist in the mere pleasures of sense; because, when any one of those objects which you love is absent, or can't be come at, you are certainly miserable: and if the  
15 faculty be impair'd, though the object be present, you can't enjoy it. So that this sensual good depends upon a thousand things without and within you, and all out of your power. Can this then be the good of man? Say, *Horatio!* what think you, Is not this a chequer'd, fleeting, fantastical good? Can that, in any propriety of speech, be called the good of man which even, while he is tasting, he  
20 may be miserable; and which when he cannot taste, he is necessarily so? Can that be our good, which costs us a good deal of pains to obtain; which cloyes in possessing; for which we must wait the return of appetite before we can enjoy again? Or, is that our good, which we can come at without difficulty; which is heightened by possession, which never ends in weariness and disappointment; and which, the more we enjoy, the better qualified we are to  
25 enjoy on?

*Hor.* The latter, I think; but why do you torment me thus? *Philocles!* shew me this good immediately.

*Phil.* I have shewed you what 'tis not; it is not sensual, but 'tis rational  
30 and moral good. It is doing all the good we can to others, by acts of humanity, friendship, generosity, and benevolence: this is that constant and durable good, which will afford contentment and satisfaction always alike, without variation or diminution. I speak to your experience now, *Horatio!* Did you ever find yourself weary of relieving the miserable? or of raising the distressed into life  
35 or happiness? Or rather, don't you find the pleasure grow upon you by repetition, and that 'tis greater in the reflection than in the act itself? Is there a pleasure upon earth to be compared with that which arises from the sense of making others happy? Can this pleasure ever be absent, or ever end but with your being? Does it not always accompany you? Doth not it lie down and rise with  
40 you? live as long as you live? give you consolation in the article of death, and remain with you in that gloomy hour, when all other things are going to forsake you, or you them?

*Hor.* How glowingly you paint, *Philocles!* Methinks *Horatio* is amongst the enthusiasts. I feel the passion: I am enchantingly convinced; but I don't  
45 know why: overborn by something stronger than reason. Sure some divinity

8. That can never—Franklin's grammar is faulty, but the sense is clear. 40. article—moment. Lat., *in articulo mortis*.

speaks within me; but prithee, *Philocles*, give me coolly the cause, why this rational and moral good so infinitely excels the meer natural or sensual.

*Phil.* I think, *Horatio!* that I have clearly shewn you the difference between merely natural or sensual good, and rational or moral good. Natural or sensual pleasure continues no longer than the action itself; but this divine or moral pleasure continues when the action is over, and swells and grows upon your hand by reflection: The one is inconstant, unsatisfying, of short duration, and attended with numberless ills; the other is constant, yields full satisfaction, is durable, and no evils preceding, accompanying, or following it. But, if you enquire farther into the cause of this difference, and would know why the moral pleasures are greater than the sensual; perhaps the reason is the same as in all other creatures, that their happiness or chief good consists in acting up to their chief faculty, or that faculty which distinguishes them from all creatures of a different species. The chief faculty in a man is his reason; and consequently his chief good; or that which may be justly called his good, consists not merely in action, but in reasonable action. By reasonable actions, we understand those actions which are preservative of the human kind, and naturally tend to produce real and unmixed happiness; and these actions, by way of distinction, we call actions morally good.

*Hor.* You speak very clearly, *Philocles!* but, that no difficulty may remain upon my mind, pray tell me what is the real difference between natural good and ill, and moral good and ill? for I know several people who use the terms without ideas.

*Phil.* That may be: the difference lies only in this; that natural good and ill is pleasure and pain: moral good and ill is pleasure or pain produced with intention and design; for 'tis the intention only that makes the agent morally good or bad.

*Hor.* But may not a man, with a very good intention, do an ill action?

*Phil.* Yes, but, then he errs in his judgment, tho' his design be good. If his error is inevitable, or such as, all things considered, he could not help, he is inculpable: but if it arose through want of diligence in forming his judgment about the nature of human actions, he is immoral and culpable.

*Hor.* I find, then, that in order to please ourselves rightly, or to do good to others morally, we should take great care of our opinions.

*Phil.* Nothing concerns you more; for, as the happiness or real good of men consists in right action, and right action cannot be produced without right opinion, it behoves us, above all things in this world, to take care that our opinions of things be according to the nature of things. The foundation of all virtue and happiness is thinking rightly. He who sees an action is right, that is, naturally tending to good, and does it because of that tendency, he only is a moral man; and he alone is capable of that constant, durable and invariable good, which has been the subject of this conversation.

*Hor.* How, my dear philosophical guide, shall I be able to know, and determine certainly, what is right and wrong in life?

*Phil.* As easily as you distinguish a circle from a square, or light from darkness. Look, *Horatio*, into the sacred book of nature; read your own nature, and view the relation which other men stand in to you, and you to them; and

you'll immediately see what constitutes human happiness, and consequently what is right.

*Hor.* We are just coming into town, and can say no more at present. You are my good genius, *Philocles*. You have shewed me what is good. You have  
5 redeemed me from the slavery and misery of folly and vice, and made me a free and happy being.

*Phil.* Then I am the happiest man in the world. Be steady, *Horatio*! Never depart from reason and virtue.

*Hor.* Sooner will I lose my existence. Good night, *Philocles*.

10 *Phil.* Adieu! dear *Horatio*!

## TO WILLIAM BROWNRIGG

Franklin's most famous scientific contributions were in the field of electricity, but as the letters and documents concerning his electrical work are often technical, his letter to Dr. Brownrigg concerning the uses of oil by navigators has been chosen to illustrate Franklin's clear and easy scientific writing. This letter is an almost perfect illustration of Baconian reasoning, beginning with a series of observations and experiments, arriving at a general theorem, and attempting to deduce from the general theory a practical application for human benefit. The student should observe that Franklin's subject—wave motion and surface tension—is really very complicated, but his incomparable gift of exposition has made a complex subject lucid and deceptively simple. He should also note that Franklin reports an experiment that failed with the same care as he does one that succeeded. The student of physics may determine how far Franklin's theory has been superseded.

William Brownrigg (1711-1800), physician and chemist, did much useful work in making mines safe. He was elected a member of the Royal Society in 1741. He read Franklin's letter before that society in 1774; it was published in the *Philosophical Transactions*, Vol. LXIV, pp. 445 ff. The text has been modernized here, following Smyth.

London, 7 November, 1773

Dear Sir, I thank you for the remarks of your learned friend at Carlisle. I had, when a youth, read and smiled at Pliny's account of a practice among the seamen of his time, to still the waves in a storm by pouring oil into the  
15 sea; which he mentions, as well as the use made of oil by the divers; but the stilling a tempest by throwing vinegar into the air had escaped me. I think with your friend, that it has been of late too much the mode to slight the learning of the ancients. The learned, too, are apt to slight too much the knowledge of the vulgar. The cooling by evaporation was long an instance of  
20 the latter. This art of smoothing the waves by oil is an instance of both.

12. **learned friend**—"Rev. Mr. Farish, who, in a letter to Dr. Brownrigg, quoted freely from Pliny." (Smyth.) 12. **Carlisle**—In the county of Cumberland, England. 13. **Pliny's account**—Pliny, *Natural History*, Bk. II, Chap. 106: ". . . everything is soothed by oil, and . . . this is the reason why divers send out small quantities of it from their mouths, because it smoothes any part which is rough and transmits the light to them;" Chap. 49 [48]: The "Typhon" "may be in a slight degree counteracted by sprinkling it with vinegar, when it comes near us, this substance being of a very cold nature." 19. **vulgar**—people.

Perhaps you may not dislike to have an account of all I have heard, and learnt, and done in this way. Take it if you please as follows.

In 1757, being at sea in a fleet of ninety-six sail bound against Louisbourg, I observed the wakes of two of the ships to be remarkable smooth, while all the others were ruffled by the wind, which blew fresh. Being puzzled with the differing appearance, I at last pointed it out to our captain, and asked him the meaning of it. "The cooks," says he, "have, I suppose, been just emptying their greasy water through the scuppers, which has greased the sides of those ships a little;" and this answer he gave me with an air of some little contempt, as to a person ignorant of what everybody else knew. In my own mind I at first slighted his solution, though I was not able to think of another; but recollecting what I had formerly read in Pliny, I resolved to make some experiment of the effect of oil on water, when I should have opportunity.

Afterwards being again at sea in 1762, I first observed the wonderful quietness of oil on agitated water, in the swinging glass lamp I made to hang up in the cabin, as described in my printed papers. This I was continually looking at and considering as an appearance to me inexplicable. An old sea captain, then a passenger with me, thought little of it, supposing it an effect of the same kind with that of oil put on water to smooth it, which he said was a practice of the Bermudians when they would strike fish, which they could not see, if the surface of the water was ruffled by the wind. This practice I had never before heard of, and was obliged to him for the information; though I thought him mistaken as to the sameness of the experiment, the operations being different as well as the effects. In one case, the water is smooth till the oil is put on, and then becomes agitated. In the other it is agitated before the oil is applied, and then becomes smooth. The same gentleman told me, he had heard it was a practice with the fishermen of Lisbon when about to return into the river (if they saw before them too great a surf upon the bar, which they apprehended might fill their boats in passing) to empty a bottle or two of oil into the sea, which would suppress the breakers, and allow them to pass safely. A confirmation of this I have not since had an opportunity of obtaining; but discoursing of it with another person who had often been in the Mediterranean, I was informed, that the divers there, who, when under water in their business, need light, which the curling of the surface interrupts by the refractions of so many little waves, let a small quantity of oil now and then out of their mouths, which rising to the surface smooths it, and permits the light to come down to them. All these informations I at times revolved in my mind, and wondered to find no mention of them in our books of experimental philosophy.

At length being at Clapham, where there is, on the common, a large pond,

**3. fleet**—When Franklin sailed for England in 1757, the packet on which he took passage was compelled to accompany Loudon's expedition against Louisburg for five days. See *Writings*, Vol. I, pp. 425-28. **14. again at sea**—Franklin returned briefly to America at the end of August, 1762, "in company with ten sail of merchant ships under the convoy of a man-of-war." **15. swinging glass lamp**—Franklin describes this phenomenon and experiments conducted by him in a letter to Sir John Pringle (*Writings*, Vol. IV, pp. 177-79). **38-39. experimental philosophy**—about equivalent to "laboratory science." **40. Clapham**—a district of London a mile south of the Thames. The common referred to is Clapham Common, with its pond.

which I observed one day to be very rough with the wind, I fetched out a cruet of oil, and dropped a little of it on the water. I saw it spread itself with surprising swiftness upon the surface; but the effect of smoothing the waves was not produced; for I had applied it first on the leeward side of the pond, where the waves were largest, and the wind drove my oil back upon the shore. I then went to the windward side where they began to form; and there the oil, though not more than a tea spoonful, produced an instant calm over a space several yards square, which spread amazingly, and extended itself gradually till it reached the lee side, making all that quarter of the pond, perhaps half an acre, as smooth as a looking-glass.

After this I contrived to take with me, whenever I went into the country, a little oil in the upper hollow joint of my bamboo cane, with which I might repeat the experiment as opportunity should offer, and I found it constantly to succeed.

In these experiments, one circumstance struck me with particular surprise. This was the sudden, wide, and forcible spreading of a drop of oil on the face of the water, which I do not know that anybody has hitherto considered. If a drop of oil is put on a highly polished marble table, or on a looking-glass that lies horizontally, the drop remains in its place, spreading very little. But, when put on water, it spreads instantly many feet round, becoming so thin as to produce the prismatic colors, for a considerable space, and beyond them so much thinner as to be invisible, except in its effect of smoothing the waves at a much greater distance. It seems as if a mutual repulsion between its particles took place as soon as it touched the water, and a repulsion so strong as to act on other bodies swimming on the surface, as straw, leaves, chips, &c. forcing them to recede every way from the drop, as from a centre, leaving a large, clear space. The quantity of this force, and the distance to which it will operate, I have not yet ascertained; but I think it is a curious inquiry, and I wish to understand whence it arises.

In our journey to the North, when we had the pleasure of seeing you at Ormathwaite, we visited the celebrated Mr. Smeaton, near Leeds. Being about to show him the smoothing experiment on a little pond near his house, an ingenious pupil of his, Mr. Jessop, then present, told us of an odd appearance on that pond, which had lately occurred to him. He was about to clean a little cup in which he kept oil, and he threw upon the water some flies that had been drowned in the oil. These flies presently began to move, and turned round on the water very rapidly, as if they were vigorously alive, though on examination he found they were not so. I immediately concluded that the motion was occasioned by the power of the repulsion above mentioned, and that the oil issuing gradually from the spongy body of the fly continued the motion. He found some more flies drowned in oil, with which the experiment was repeated before us. To show that it was not any effect of life recovered by the flies, I imitated it by little bits of oiled chips and paper, cut in the form of a

30-31. journey to . . . North . . . Ormathwaite—This was apparently during the spring of 1771. Ormathwaite was Brownrigg's paternal estate, situated near Keswick, in Cumberland. 31. Smeaton—John Smeaton (1724-1792), member of the Royal Society, and famous as the engineer who constructed the third Eddystone lighthouse. 33. Jessop—This appearance seems to be Mr. Jessop's sole claim to immortality.

comma, of the size of a common fly; when the stream of repelling particles issuing from the point made the comma turn round the contrary way. This is not a chamber experiment; for it cannot be well repeated in a bowl or dish of water on a table. A considerable surface of water is necessary to give room for the expansion of a small quantity of oil. In a dish of water, if the smallest drop of oil be let fall in the middle, the whole surface is presently covered with a thin greasy film proceeding from the drop; but as soon as that film has reached the sides of the dish, no more will issue from the drop, but it remains in the form of oil, the sides of the dish putting a stop to its dissipation by prohibiting the farther expansion of the film. 5 10

Our friend Sir John Pringle, being soon after in Scotland, learned there, that those employed in the herring fishery could at a distance see where the shoals of herrings were, by the smoothness of the water over them, which might possibly be occasioned, he thought, by some oiliness proceeding from their bodies. 15

A gentleman from Rhode Island told me, it had been remarked that the harbour of Newport was ever smooth while any whaling vessels were in it; which probably arose from hence, that the blubber which they sometimes bring loose in the hold, or the leakage of their barrels, might afford some oil, to mix with that water, which from time to time they pump out, to keep their vessel free, and that some oil might spread over the surface of the water in the harbour, and prevent the forming of any waves. 20

This prevention I would thus endeavor to explain.

There seems to be no natural repulsion between water and air, such as to keep them from coming into contact with each other. Hence we find a quantity of air in water; and if we extract it by means of the air-pump, the same water, again exposed to the air, will soon imbibe an equal quantity. 25

Therefore air in motion, which is wind, in passing over the smooth surface of water, may rub, as it were, upon that surface, and raise it into wrinkles, which, if the wind continues, are the elements of future waves. 30

The smallest wave once raised does not immediately subside, and leave the neighbouring water quiet; but in subsiding raises nearly as much of the water next to it, the friction of the parts making little difference. Thus a stone dropped in a pool raises first a single wave round itself; and leaves it, by sinking to the bottom; but that first wave subsiding raises a second, the second a third, and so on in circles to a great extent. 35

A small power continually operating will produce a great action. A finger applied to a weighty suspended bell can at first move it but little; if repeatedly applied, though with no greater strength, the motion increases till the bell swings to its utmost height, and with a force that cannot be resisted by the whole strength of the arm and body. Thus the small first-raised waves, being continually acted upon by the wind, are, though the wind does not increase in strength, continually increased in magnitude, rising higher and extending their bases, so as to include a vast mass of water in each wave, which in its motion acts with great violence. 40 45

11. Sir John Pringle—Sir John Pringle (1707-1782), physician to the royal family and ardent Baconian, originally practiced in Edinburgh. In 1772 he was elected president of the Royal Society.



But if there be a mutual repulsion between the particles of oil, and no attraction between oil and water, oil dropped on water will not be held together by adhesion to the spot whereon it falls; it will not be imbibed by the water; it will be at liberty to expand itself; and it will spread on a surface, that besides  
 5 being smooth to the most perfect degree of polish, prevents, perhaps by repelling the oil, all immediate contact, keeping it at a minute distance from itself; and the expansion will continue till the mutual repulsion between the particles of oil is weakened and reduced to nothing by their distance.

Now I imagine that the wind, blowing over water thus covered with a film  
 10 of oil, cannot easily *catch* upon it, so as to raise the first wrinkles, but slides over it and leaves it smooth as it finds it. It moves a little the oil indeed, which being between it and the water, serves it to slide with, and prevents friction, as oil does between those parts of a machine that would otherwise rub hard together. Hence the oil dropped on the windward side of a pond proceeds  
 15 gradually to leeward, as may be seen by the smoothness it carries with it, quite to the opposite side. For the wind being thus prevented from raising the first wrinkles, that I call the elements of waves, cannot produce waves, which are to be made by continually acting upon, and enlarging those elements, and thus the whole pond is calmed.

Totally therefore we might suppress the waves in any required place, if we  
 20 could come at the windward place where they take their rise. This in the ocean can seldom if ever be done. But perhaps something may be done on particular occasions, to moderate the violence of the waves when we are in the midst of them, and prevent their breaking where that would be inconvenient.  
 25

For, when the wind blows fresh, there are continually rising on the back of every great wave a number of small ones, which roughen its surface, and give the wind hold, as it were, to push it with greater force. This hold is diminished, by preventing the generation of those small ones. And possibly  
 30 too, when a wave's surface is oiled, the wind, in passing over it, may rather in some degree press it down, and contribute to prevent its rising again, instead of promoting it.

This, as mere conjecture, would have little weight, if the apparent effects of pouring oil into the midst of waves were not considerable, and as yet not  
 35 otherwise accounted for.

When the wind blows so fresh, as that the waves are not sufficiently quick in obeying its impulse, their tops being thinner and lighter are pushed forward, broken, and turned over in a white foam. Common waves lift a vessel without entering it; but these when large sometimes break above and pour over it,  
 40 doing great damage.

That this effect might in any degree be prevented, or the height and violence of waves in the sea moderated, we had no certain account; Pliny's authority for the practice of seamen in his time being slighted. But discoursing lately on this subject with his Excellency Count Bentinck, of Holland, his son the

44 ff. Count Bentinck . . . Captain Bentinck—William, Count Bentinck (1704-1773),  
 a Dutch diplomat, made various visits to England, and was at one time curator of the Leyden

Honorable Captain Bentinck, and the learned Professor Allemand, (to all whom I showed the experiment of smoothing in a windy day the large piece of water at the head of the Green Park,) a letter was mentioned which had been received by the Count from Batavia, relative to the saving of a Dutch ship in a storm by pouring oil into the sea. I much desired to see that letter, and a copy of it was promised me, which I afterward received.

*Extract of a Letter from Mr. Tengnagel to Count Bentinck, dated at Batavia, 5 January, 1770*

"Near the islands Paul and Amsterdam, we met with a storm, which had nothing particular in it worthy of being communicated to you, except that the captain found himself obliged for greater safety in wearing the ship, to pour oil into the sea, to prevent the waves breaking over her, which had an excellent effect, and succeeded in preserving us. As he poured out but a little at a time, the East India Company owes perhaps its ships to only six demi-ames of oil-olive. I was present upon deck when this was done; and I should not have mentioned this circumstance to you, but that we have found people here so prejudiced against the experiment, as to make it necessary for the officers on board and myself to give a certificate of the truth on this head, of which we made no difficulty."

On this occasion I mentioned to Captain Bentinck a thought which had occurred to me in reading the voyages of our late circumnavigators, particularly where accounts are given of pleasant and fertile islands which they much desired to land upon, when sickness made it more necessary, but could not effect a landing through a violent surf breaking on the shore, which rendered it impracticable. My idea was, that possibly by sailing to and fro at some distance from such lee-shore, continually pouring oil into the sea, the waves might be so much depressed and lessened before they reached the shore, as to abate the height and violence of the surf, and permit a landing; which, in such circumstances, was a point of sufficient importance to justify the expense of the oil that might be requisite for the purpose. That gentleman, who is ever ready to promote what may be of public utility, though his own ingenious inventions have not always met with the countenance they merited, was so obliging as to invite me to Portsmouth where an opportunity would probably

Academy. His son, Captain John Albert Bentinck (1737-1775), who had "great ingenuity in mechanical pursuits," was appointed to the command of the *Centaure*, a guardship of 74 guns lying off Portsmouth, in 1770.

1. **Professor Allemand**—Jean Nicholas Sébastien Allamand (1713-1787), a learned Swiss and a disciple of Newton, whose interests included electricity, mathematics, and theology. He was associated with the University of Leyden, and was also a member of the Royal Society. 3. **Green Park**—This park, near St. James Park, contained a reservoir. 4. **Batavia**—In Java, the principal seaport of the Dutch East Indies. 9. **Paul and Amsterdam**—the islands of St. Paul and New Amsterdam, lying in the southernmost part of the Indian Ocean. 14. **East India Company**—the Dutch East India Company, dissolved in 1798. 14. **demi-ames**—An ame, or aam, is a Dutch liquid measure of approximately 40 gallons. 21. **late circumnavigators**—In 1768-71 Captain James Cook made his first voyage round the world, an account of which was published in Vols. II and III of Hawkesworth's *Voyages* (1773). Cook's first expedition had been marked by much sickness among his men.

offer, in the course of a few days, of making the experiment on some of the shores about Spithead, in which he kindly proposed to accompany me, and to give assistance with such boats as might be necessary. Accordingly, about the middle of October last, I went with some friends to Portsmouth; and a  
 5 day of wind happening, which made a lee-shore between Haslar Hospital and the point near Jillkecker, we went from the Centaur with the longboat and barge towards that shore. Our disposition was this; the longboat was anchored about a quarter of a mile from the shore; part of the company were landed behind the point (a place more sheltered from the sea) who came round and  
 10 placed themselves opposite to the longboat, where they might observe the surf, and note if any change occurred in it upon using the oil. Another party, in the barge, plied to windward of the longboat, as far from her as she was from the shore, making trips of about half a mile each, pouring oil continually out of a large stone bottle, through a hole in the cork, somewhat bigger than a  
 15 goose-quill. The experiment had not, in the main point, the success we wished, for no material difference was observed in the height or force of the surf upon the shore; but those who were in the longboat could observe a tract of smoothed water, the whole of the distance in which the barge poured the oil, and gradually spreading in breadth towards the long-boat. I call it smoothed,  
 20 not that it was laid level, but because, though the swell continued, its surface was not roughened by the wrinkles, or smaller waves, before mentioned; and none or very few white caps (or waves whose tops turn over in foam) appeared in that whole space, though to windward and leeward of it there were plenty; and a wherry, that came round the point under sail, in her way to Portsmouth,  
 25 seemed to turn into that tract of choice, and to use it from end to end as a piece of turnpike road.

It may be of use to relate the circumstances of an experiment that does not succeed, since they may give hints of amendment in future trials; it is therefore I have been thus particular. I shall only add what I apprehend may have  
 30 been the reason of our disappointment.

I conceive that the operation of oil on water is, first, to prevent the raising of new waves by the wind; and, secondly, to prevent its pushing those before raised with such force, and consequently their continuance of the same repeated height, as they would have done, if their surface were not oiled. But oil will  
 35 not prevent waves being raised by another power, by a stone, for instance, falling into a still pool; for they then rise by the mechanical impulse of the stone, which the greasiness on the surrounding water cannot lessen or prevent, as it can prevent the winds catching the surface and raising it into waves. Now waves once raised, whether by the wind or any other power, have the  
 40 same mechanical operation, by which they continue to rise and fall, as a *pendulum* will continue to swing a long time after the force ceases to act by which the motion was first produced; that motion will, however, cease in time; but time is necessary. Therefore, though oil spread on an agitated sea

5. **Haslar Hospital**—This hospital is on the west side of the harbor. Reference to a detailed map of Portsmouth will make the situation clear. 6-7. **longboat** . . . **barge**—The longboat and the barge are the first and second boats respectively of a man-of-war. 24. **wherry**—here, apparently a barge.

may weaken the push of the wind on those waves whose surfaces are covered by it, and so, by receiving less fresh impulse, they may gradually subside; yet a considerable time, or a distance through which they will take time to move, may be necessary to make the effect sensible on any shore in a diminution of the surf; for we know, that, when wind ceases suddenly, the waves it has raised do not suddenly subside, but settle gradually, and are not quite down till after the wind has ceased. So, though we should, by oiling them, take off the effect of wind or waves already raised, it is not to be expected that those waves should be instantly levelled. The motion they have received will, for some time, continue; and, if the shore is not far distant, they arrive there so soon, that their effect upon it will not be visibly diminished. Possibly, therefore, if we had begun our operations at a greater distance, the effect might have been more sensible. And perhaps we did not pour oil in sufficient quantity. Future experiments may determine this.

I was, however, greatly obliged to Captain Bentinck for the cheerful and ready aids he gave me; and I ought not to omit mentioning Mr. Banks, Dr. Solander, General Carnoc, and Dr. Blagden, who all assisted at the experiment, during that blustering, unpleasant day, with a patience and activity that could only be inspired by a zeal for the improvement of knowledge, such especially as might possibly be of use to men in situations of distress.

I would wish you to communicate this to your ingenious friend, Mr. Farish, with my respects; and believe me to be, with sincere esteem, dear Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN

## TO JOSEPH PRIESTLEY

Throughout the American Revolution Franklin was a skillful propagandist for the American cause. The letter to Priestley here reprinted is representative of many others.

Joseph Priestley (1733-1804), famous chemist, was one of the group of liberals in England who favored the American cause. Franklin exchanged numerous letters with him.

Philadelphia, 3 October, 1775 25

Dear Sir:—I am to set out to-morrow for the camp, and, having just heard of this opportunity, can only write a line to say that I am well and hearty. Tell our dear good friend, [Dr. Price,] who sometimes has his doubts and despondencies about our firmness, that America is determined and unanimous;

**16-17. Banks . . . Blagden**—Joseph (later Sir Joseph) Banks (1743-1820), a member of the Royal Society and later its president, had just returned (May 4, 1771) with Cook from the East Indies. Daniel C. Solander (1736-1782), also a member of the Royal Society, had accompanied him. Charles (later Sir Charles) Blagden (1748-1820) was elected to the Royal Society five days after this letter was written; he was the friend of Banks. General Carnoc cannot be identified, though Lazare-Hippolyte-Marguerite Carnot (1753-1823), then a lieutenant of French engineers, was stationed at Calais at this period. Associations like these testify to Franklin's European importance. **17. assisted—assister** (Fr.): to be present at. **26. set out**—Franklin was appointed one of a committee of three to confer with Washington, the Continental Army then being at Cambridge, on means of its support. **28. Dr. Price**—Dr. Richard Price (1723-1791), like Priestley, was one of the group of intellectual radicals who supported revolutionary doctrines. He is remembered as a pamphleteer.

a very few Tories and placemen excepted, who will probably soon export themselves. Britain, at the expense of three millions, has killed one hundred and fifty Yankees this campaign, which is twenty thousand pounds a head; and at Bunker's Hill she gained a mile of ground, half of which she lost again by  
 5 our taking post on Ploughed Hill. During the same time sixty thousand children have been born in America. From these *data* his mathematical head will easily calculate the time and expense necessary to kill us all, and conquer our whole territory. My sincere respects to —, and to the club of honest Whigs at —. Adieu. I am ever yours most affectionately.

10

B. FRANKLIN

### FROM THE COUNT DE SCHAUMBERG TO THE BARON HOHENDORF, COMMANDING THE HESSIAN TROOPS IN AMERICA

Besides propaganda in private letters, Franklin also issued pieces like the famous "Sale of the Hessians," which cleverly misrepresented the facts, in favor of the American cause. The real truth concerning the enlistment of Hessian soldiers for the American War can be found in such an article as J. G. Rosengarten's "A Defence of the Hessians," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 157-83, or in Chapter VII of C. H. Van Tyne, *The War of Independence*, Houghton Mifflin, 1929. The Elector of Hesse-Cassel, Friedrich or Frederick II, seems to have been a relatively conscientious ruler, but there was a widespread belief, of which Franklin takes advantage in this "letter," that he pocketed the money earned by his troops. The personages of Franklin's letter are, of course, imaginary, though the names are real. From the present letter it appears that the Count de Schaumberg, who has hired the troops out to Great Britain, will be paid a bonus upon the death of every soldier. Hence, his elation at the deaths.

Rome, 18 February, 1777.

Monsieur le Baron:—On my return from Naples, I received at Rome your letter of the 27th December of last year. I have learned with unspeakable pleasure the courage our troops exhibited at Trenton, and you cannot imagine my  
 15 joy on being told that of the 1,950 Hessians engaged in the fight, but 345 escaped. There were just 1,605 killed, and I cannot sufficiently commend your prudence in sending an exact list of the dead to my minister in London. This precaution was the more necessary, as the report sent to the English ministry does not give but 1,455 dead. This would make 483,450 florins instead of the

1. **placemen**—office-holders. 2. **Britain, etc.**—Accuracy is of course not expected of a propagandist. Yankee losses at the battle of Bunker's Hill (fought on Breed's Hill, June 17, 1775) were 450. Franklin was apparently unaware that the British loss was 1,054. 5. **Ploughed Hill**—The three hills, in order of nearness to Cambridge, are Breed's Hill, Bunker's Hill, and Ploughed Hill. Taking post on Ploughed Hill by the Americans had little effect on the British situation. 8-9. **Whigs at —**—According to Smyth, the London Coffeehouse, center of Whig interest, is meant. 14. **Trenton**—On Christmas night, 1777, Washington's army made a surprise attack on 1,200 Hessian troops under Colonel Rahl stationed at Trenton, New Jersey. The American loss was 2 privates killed, 1 frozen to death, and 6 men wounded. Washington estimated that 20 or 30 Hessians were killed. Hessian prisoners numbered 918. Franklin's figures are exaggerated.

643,500 which I am entitled to demand under our convention. You will comprehend the prejudice which such an error would work in my finances, and I do not doubt you will take the necessary pains to prove that Lord North's list is false and yours correct.

The court of London objects that there were a hundred wounded who ought not to be included in the list, nor paid for as dead; but I trust you will not overlook my instructions to you on quitting Cassel, and that you will not have tried by human succor to recall to life the unfortunates whose days could not be lengthened but by the loss of a leg or an arm. That would be making them a pernicious present, and I am sure they would rather die than live in a condition no longer fit for my service. I do not mean by this that you should assassinate them; we should be humane, my dear Baron, but you may insinuate to the surgeons with entire propriety that a crippled man is a reproach to their profession, and that there is no wiser course than to let every one of them die when he ceases to be fit to fight.

I am about to send you some new recruits. Don't economize them. Remember glory before all things. Glory is true wealth. There is nothing degrades the soldier like the love of money. He must care only for honor and reputation, but this reputation must be acquired in the midst of dangers. A battle gained without costing the conqueror any blood is an inglorious success, while the conquered cover themselves with glory by perishing with their arms in their hands. Do you remember that of the 300 Lacedaemonians who defended the defile of Thermopylae, not one returned? How happy should I be could I say the same of my brave Hessians!

It is true that their king, Leonidas, perished with them; but things have changed, and it is no longer the custom for princes of the empire to go and fight in America for a cause with which they have no concern. And besides, to whom should they pay the thirty guineas per man if I did not stay in Europe to receive them? Then, it is necessary also that I be ready to send recruits to replace the men you lose. For this purpose I must return to Hesse. It is true, grown men are becoming scarcer there, but I will send you boys. Besides, the scarcer the commodity, the higher the price. I am assured that the women and little girls have begun to till our lands, and they get on not badly. You did right to send back to Europe that Dr. Crumerus who was so successful in curing dysentery. Don't bother with a man who is subject to looseness of the bowels. That disease makes bad soldiers. One coward will do more mischief in an engagement than ten brave men will do good. Better that they burst in their barracks than fly in a battle, and tarnish the glory of our arms. Besides, you know that they pay me as killed all who die from disease, and I don't get a farthing from runaways. My trip to Italy, which has cost

3. **Lord North's**—Frederick North, second Earl of Guilford (1732-1792), known as Lord North, was Prime Minister from 1770 to 1782, and was somewhat unfairly held responsible by the Americans for the events leading to the American Revolution. 7. **Cassel**—In the eighteenth century Cassel was the capital city of the electorate of Hesse-Cassel. 26. **princes of the empire**—The Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel was an elector of the Holy Roman Empire. 28. **thirty guineas**—The exact subsidy which the Landgrave received is not known. Parliament voted almost £3,000,000 to Hesse-Cassel during the eight years of the war. 31. **grown men are . . . scarcer**—Franklin undoubtedly exaggerates, though the drain on Hesse-Cassel, the population of which was about 300,000, was heavy, 17,000 soldiers being sent to America.

me enormously, makes it desirable that there should be a great mortality among them. You will therefore promise promotion to all who expose themselves; you will exhort them to seek glory in the midst of dangers; you will say to Major Maundorff that I am not at all content with his saving the 345 men  
 5 who escaped the massacre at Trenton. Through the whole campaign he has not had ten men killed in consequence of his orders. Finally, let it be your principal object to prolong the war and avoid a decisive engagement on either side, for I have made arrangements for a grand Italian opera, and I do not wish to be obliged to give it up. Meantime I pray God, my dear Baron de  
 10 Hohendorf, to have you in his holy and gracious keeping.

## THE EPHEMERA

### AN EMBLEM OF HUMAN LIFE

Some time after Franklin was installed at the Hôtel de Valentinois, Passy (then a suburb of Versailles), where he lived while he was one of the American representatives in France, he bought a small printing press and type, with which he printed short pieces of propaganda for the American cause, or short essays, known as "Bagatelles," for the amusement of his friends. The best known of these latter is "The Whistle." "The Ephemera," which is here reprinted, is, however, more searching in its philosophy, besides showing traces of that French wit which Franklin blended with his native humor. The piece was written in 1778; when it was printed is not exactly known; and, as is the case with many of Franklin's writings, the problem of the text is complicated. See L. S. Livingston, *Franklin and His Press at Passy*, Grolier Club, 1914, especially pp. 28-31.

The original French edition is headed by an "Avertissement du Traducteur" and the following paragraph, omitted in the English version:

"Madame B[rillon] est une Dame fort aimable, & qui possède [*sic*] un talent distingué pour la Musique; elle demeure à Passy où elle est en société avec M. Franklin. Ils avoient dans l'été de 1778 été [*sic*] passés une journée au *Moulin Joly* où ce même jour voltigeoit sur la rivière [*sic*] en essaim de ces petites mouches que l'on nomme Ephemerés, [*sic*] & que le peuple appelle de la Manne. M. Franklin les examina avec attention, & envoya le lendemain à Madame B[rillon] la lettre dont voici la traduction."

15 **Y**OU MAY remember, my dear friend, that when we lately spent that happy day in the delightful garden and sweet society of the Moulin Joly, I stopt a little in one of our walks, and staid some time behind the company. We had been shown numberless skeletons of a kind of little fly, called an ephemera, whose successive generations, we were told, were bred and expired within the day. I happened to see a living company of them on a leaf,

11. **my dear friend**—Madame Brillon de Jouy, a young and attractive Frenchwoman, with whom Franklin was on intimate terms during his years at Passy. On their relations see *Writings*, Vol. X, pp. 408 ff., and Faÿ, *Franklin*, pp. 463-68. 12. **Moulin Joly**—an English garden on a little island in the Seine. See Franklin's letter to Carmichael, *Writings*, Vol. VIII, pp. 98-100.

who appeared to be engaged in conversation. You know I understand all the inferior animal tongues: my too great application of the study of them is the best excuse I can give for the little progress I have made in your charming language. I listened through curiosity to the discourse of these little creatures; but as they, in their national vivacity, spoke three or four together, I could make but little of their conversation. I found, however, by some broken expressions that I heard now and then, they were disputing warmly on the merits of two foreign musicians, one a *cousin*, the other a *moscheto*; in which dispute they spent their time, seemingly as regardless of the shortness of life as if they had been sure of living a month. Happy people! thought I, you live certainly under a wise, just, and mild government, since you have no public grievances to complain of, nor any subject of contention but the perfections and imperfections of foreign music. I turned my head from them to an old grey-headed one, who was single on another leaf, and talking to himself. Being amused with his soliloquy, I put it down in writing, in hopes it will likewise amuse her to whom I am so much indebted for the most pleasing of all amusements, her delicious company and heavenly harmony.

"It was," said he, "the opinion of learned philosophers of our race, who lived and flourished long before my time, that this vast world, the Moulin Joly, could not itself subsist more than eighteen hours; and I think there was some foundation for that opinion, since, by the apparent motion of the great luminary that gives life to all nature, and which in my time has evidently declined considerably towards the ocean at the end of our earth, it must then finish its course, be extinguished in the waters that surround us, and leave the world in cold and darkness, necessarily producing universal death and destruction. I have lived seven of those hours, a great age, being no less than four hundred and twenty minutes of time. How very few of us continue so long! I have seen generations born, flourish, and expire. My present friends are the children and grandchildren of the friends of my youth, who are now, alas, no more! And I must soon follow them; for, by the course of nature, though still in health, I cannot expect to live above seven or eight minutes longer. What now avails all my toil and labor, in amassing honey-dew on this leaf, which I cannot live to enjoy! What the political struggles I have been engaged in, for the good of my compatriot inhabitants of this bush, or my philosophical studies for the benefit of our race in general! for, in politics, what can laws do without morals? Our present race of ephemerae will in a course of minutes become corrupt, like those of other and older bushes, and consequently as wretched. And in philosophy how small our progress! Alas! art is long, and life is short! My friends would comfort me with the idea of a name, they say, I shall leave behind me; and they tell me I have lived long enough to nature and to glory. But what will fame be to an ephemera who no longer exists? And what will

3-4. **your charming language**—Madame Brillon sometimes corrected Franklin's French but, finding that in his anxiety to be correct, his style was losing savor, she advised him to forget the rules and write as he felt. 8. **cousin** . . . **moscheto**—*cousin*, gnat; *moscheto*, mosquito. In 1778 Paris was divided between the adherents of Piccini, who represented the conventional Italianate music, and those of Gluck, the founder of modern opera and representative of the German school. 17. **heavenly harmony**—Madame Brillon "has, among other elegant accomplishments, that of an excellent musician." (Franklin to Carmichael, *loc. cit.*)



become of all history in the eighteenth hour, when the world itself, even the whole Moulin Joly, shall come to its end, and be buried in universal ruin?"

- To me, after all my eager pursuits, no solid pleasures now remain, but the reflection of a long life spent in meaning well, the sensible conversation of a few good lady ephemera, and now and then a kind smile and a tune from the ever amiable *Brillante*.

B. FRANKLIN

## TO MRS. SARAH BACHE

While Franklin wrote much in a formal and technical vein on political problems, the greater part of this writing is for the special student; but, as illustrating his attitude towards democracy, the letter to his daughter in which he discusses with characteristic humor the Society of the Cincinnati has been chosen. The text is modernized.

Franklin's daughter, Sarah (1744-1808), to whom many of his most charming letters are written, married in 1767 Richard Bache, a prominent American business man.

Passy, 26 January, 1784

- My Dear Child:—Your care in sending me the newspapers is very agreeable to me. I received by Captain Barney those relating to the *Cincinnati*. My opinion of the institution cannot be of much importance. I only wonder that, when the united wisdom of our nation had, in the Articles of Confederation, manifested their dislike of establishing ranks of nobility, by authority either of the Congress or of any particular state, a number of private persons should think proper to distinguish themselves and their posterity, from their fellow-citizens, and form an order of *hereditary knights*, in direct opposition to the solemnly declared sense of their country! I imagine it must be likewise contrary to the good sense of most of those drawn into it by the persuasion of its projectors, who have been too much struck with the ribbands and crosses they have seen hanging to the buttonholes of foreign officers. And I suppose those who disapprove of it have not hitherto given it much opposition, from a principle somewhat like that of your good mother, relating to punctilious persons, who are always exacting little observances of respect: that, "*if people can be pleased with small matters, it is a pity but they should have them.*"
- In this view, perhaps, I should not myself, if my advice had been asked,

6. *Brillante*—that is, Madame Brillou. 10. *Barney*—Joshua Barney (1759-1818), with John Paul Jones, the most brilliant naval officer in the little American navy. 10. *Cincinnati*—The Society of the Cincinnati was organized May 13, 1783, by the officers of the Continental army, near Fishkill, New York, with the following object: "To perpetuate as well the remembrance of this vast event as the mutual friendships which have been formed under the pressure of common danger . . . the officers of the American army do hereby, in the most solemn manner, associate, constitute, and combine themselves into one society of friends to endure as long as they shall endure, or any of their closest male posterity, and in failure thereof, the collateral branches who may be deemed worthy of becoming its supports and members." Because most of the officers would be returning to their farms, the name came from Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus, who is famous in Roman history for the same procedure. The first meeting was held May 7, 1784. Despite the fact that Washington was the first president, the society almost immediately became unpopular, and ceased to exist, though it has since (1893) been revived. 14. *Congress*—the Congress sitting under the Articles of Confederation. 16. *hereditary knights*—The expression is ironical; the Cincinnati contemplated no order of knighthood.

have objected to their wearing their ribband and badge according to their fancy, though I certainly should to the entailing it as an honor on their posterity. For honour, worthily obtained (as for example that of our officers), is in its nature a *personal* thing, and incommunicable to any but those who had some in obtaining it. Thus among the Chinese, the most ancient, and from long experience the wisest of nations, honour does not *descend*, but *ascends*. If a man from his learning, his wisdom, or his valour, is promoted by the emperor to the rank of Mandarin, his parents are immediately entitled to all the same ceremonies of respect from the people that are established as due to the Mandarin himself; on the supposition that it must have been owing to the education, instruction, and good example afforded him by his parents, that he was rendered capable of serving the public.

This *ascending* honour is therefore useful to the state, as it encourages parents to give their children a good and virtuous education. But the *descending honour*, to posterity who could have no share in obtaining it, is not only groundless and absurd, but often hurtful to that posterity, since it is apt to make them proud, disdaining to be employed in useful arts, and thence falling into poverty, and all the meannesses, servility, and wretchedness attending it; which is the present case with much of what is called the *noblesse* in Europe. Or if, to keep up the dignity of the family, estates are entailed entire on the eldest male heir, another pest to industry and improvement of the country is introduced, which will be followed by all the odious mixture of pride and beggary, and idleness, that have half depopulated [and *decultivated*] Spain; occasioning continual extinction of families by the discouragements of marriage [and neglect in the improvement of estates].

I wish, therefore, that the Cincinnati, if they must go on with their project, would direct the badges of their order to be worn by their parents, instead of handing them down to their children. It would be a good precedent, and might have good effects. It would also be a kind of obedience of the fourth commandment, in which God enjoins us to *honour* our father and mother, but has nowhere directed us to honour our children. And certainly no mode of honouring those immediate authors of our being can be more effectual, than that of doing praiseworthy actions, which reflect honour on those who gave us our education; or more becoming, than that of manifesting, by some public expression or token, that it is to their instruction and example we ascribe the merit of those actions.

But the absurdity of *descending honours* is not a mere matter of philosophical opinion; it is capable of mathematical demonstration. A man's son, for

1. **ribbon and badge**—The emblem of the society was a badge suspended from a light-blue ribbon edged with white, suggesting the union of French and American forces. The badge displays an eagle; Cincinnatus receiving a sword from three Roman Senators, his wife, his cottage, and his plow in the background. This is surrounded by the Latin motto: *Omnia Relinquit Servare Rempublicam*—"He left all to serve the republic." On the reverse of the medal is a rising sun, a city with open gates and vessels entering the harbor, and Fame crowning Cincinnatus with a wreath inscribed *Virtutis Praemium*—"The reward of integrity." Below these are joined hands supporting a heart inscribed *Esio Perpetua*—"Be everlasting." These details make clear Franklin's various references. 23. **and decultivated**—Passages in brackets were added to the original draft, now in the Library of Congress (Smyth). 38. **mathematical demonstration**—Franklin liked to amuse himself with mathematical games like the making of magic squares and so on. See the index to *Writings* under "Magical circles" and "Magical squares."

instance, is but half of his family, the other half belonging to the family of his wife. His son, too, marrying into another family, his share in the grandson is but a fourth; in the great-grandson, by the same process, it is but an eighth; in the next generation a sixteenth; the next a thirty-second; the next a sixty-  
 5 fourth; the next an hundred and twenty-eighth; the next a two hundred and fifty-sixth; and the next a five hundred and twelfth. Thus in nine generations, which will not require more than 300 years (no very great antiquity for a family), our present Chevalier of the Order of Cincinnatus's share in the then existing knight will be but a five hundred and twelfth part; which, allowing  
 10 the present certain fidelity of American wives to be insured down through all those nine generations, is so small a consideration, that methinks no reasonable man would hazard for the sake of it the disagreeable consequences of the jealousy, envy, and ill will of his countrymen.

Let us go back with our calculation from this young noble, the 512th part  
 15 of the present knight, through his nine generations, till we return to the year of the institution. He must have had a father and a mother, they are two; each of them had a father and a mother, they are four. Those of the next preceding generation will be eight, the next sixteen, the next thirty-two, the next sixty-four, the next one hundred and twenty-eight, the next two hundred  
 20 and fifty-six, and the ninth in this retrocession five hundred and twelve, who must be now existing, and all contribute their proportion of their future *Chevalier de Cincinnatus*. Those, with the rest, make together as follows:

	2
	4
25	8
	16
	32
	64
	128
30	256
	512
<hr/>	
Total . . . . 1022	

One thousand and twenty-two men and women, contributors to the formation  
 35 of one knight. And, if we are to have a thousand of these future knights, there must be now and hereafter existing one million and twenty-two thousand fathers and mothers who are to contribute to their production, unless a part of the number are employed in making more knights than one. Let us strike off, then, the 22,000, on the supposition of this double employ, and then consider whether, after a reasonable estimation of the number of rogues, and  
 40 fools, and royalists and scoundrels, and prostitutes that are mixed with, and help to make up, necessarily their million of predecessors, posterity will have much reason to boast of the noble blood of the then existing set of Chevaliers de Cincinnatus. [The future genealogists, too, of these Chevaliers, in  
 45 proving the lineal descent of their honour through so many generations (even

supposing honour capable in its nature of descending), will only prove the small share of this honour which can be justly claimed by any one of them, since the above simple process in arithmetic makes it quite plain and clear that, in proportion as the antiquity of the family shall augment, the right to the honour of the ancestor will diminish; and a few generations more would 5 reduce it to something so small as to be very near an absolute nullity.] I hope, therefore, that the Order will drop this part of their project, and content themselves, as the Knights of the Garter, Bath, Thistle, St. Louis, and other Orders of Europe do, with a life enjoyment of their little badge and ribband, and let the distinction die with those who have merited it. This, I imagine, will 10 give no offence. For my own part, I shall think it a convenience when I go into a company where there may be faces unknown to me, if I discover, by this badge, the persons who merit some particular expression of my respect; and it will save modest virtue the trouble of calling for our regard by awkward roundabout intimations of having been heretofore employed as officers in the 15 Continental service.

The gentleman, who made the voyage to France to provide the ribands and medals, has executed his commission. To me they seem tolerably done; but all such things are criticised. Some find fault with the Latin, as wanting classical elegance and correctness; and, since our nine universities were not able 20 to furnish better Latin, it was pity, they say, that the mottoes had not been in English. Others object to the title, as not properly assumable by any but Gen. Washington, [and a few others] who served without pay. Others object to the *bald eagle* as looking too much like a *dindon*, or turkey. For my own part, I wish the bald eagle had not been chosen as the representative of our 25 country; he is a bird of bad moral character; he does not get his living honestly; you may have seen him perched on some dead tree where, too lazy to fish for himself, he watches the labour of the fishing-hawk; and when that diligent bird has at length taken a fish, and is bearing it to his nest for the support of his mate and young ones, the bald eagle pursues him and takes 30 it from him. With all this injustice he is never in good case; but, like those among men who live by sharpening and robbing, he is generally poor, and often very lousy. Besides, he is a rank coward; the little *kingbird*, not bigger than a sparrow, attacks him boldly and drives him out of the district. He is therefore by no means a proper emblem for the brave and honest Cincinnati of 35 America, who have driven all the *kingbirds* from our country; though exactly fit for that order of knights which the French call *Chevaliers d'Industrie*.

I am, on this account, not displeased that the figure is not known as a bald eagle, but looks more like a turkey. For in truth, the turkey is in comparison a much more respectable bird, and withal a true original native of America. 40 Eagles have been found in all countries, but the turkey was peculiar to ours; the first of the species seen in Europe being brought to France by the Jesuits

8. **Garter . . . St. Louis**—The Knights of the Garter and the Knights of the Bath are English in origin, the Order of the Thistle is Scotch, and that of St. Louis is French. 20. **nine universities**—Franklin apparently has in mind the schools which developed as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Dartmouth, Rutgers, Columbia, Brown, Pennsylvania, William and Mary. 37. **Chevaliers d'Industrie**—those who live by their wits.

from Canada, and served up at the wedding table of Charles the Ninth. He is [though a little vain and silly, it is true, but not the worse emblem for that,] a bird of courage, and would not hesitate to attack a grenadier of the British Guards, who should presume to invade his farmyard with a *red* coat on.

- 5 I shall not enter into the criticisms made upon their Latin. The gallant officers of America may not have the merit of being great scholars, but they undoubtedly merit much, as brave soldiers, from their country, which should therefore not leave them merely to *fame* for their "*virtutis premium*," which is one of their Latin mottoes. Their "*esto perpetua*," another, is an excellent wish,  
 10 if they meant it for their country; bad, if intended for their order. The states should not only restore to them the *omnia* of their first motto, which many of them have left and lost, but pay them justly, and reward them generously. They should not be suffered to remain, with [all] their new-created chivalry, *entirely* in the situation of the gentleman in the story, which their *omnia*  
 15 *reliquit* reminds me of. You know every thing makes me recollect some story. He had built a very fine house, and thereby much impaired his fortune. He had a pride, however, in showing it to his acquaintance. One of them, after viewing it all, remarked a motto over the door "*OMIA VANITAS*." "What," says he, "is the meaning of this *OMIA*? It is a word I don't understand." "I will tell you,"  
 20 said the gentleman; "I had a mind to have the motto cut on a piece of smooth marble, but there was not room for it between the ornaments, to be put in characters large enough to read. I therefore made use of a contraction anciently very common in Latin manuscripts, whereby the *m*'s and *n*'s in words are omitted, and the omission noted by a line above, which you may see there;  
 25 so that the word is *omnia*, OMNIA VANITAS." "Oh," says his friend, "I now comprehend the meaning of your motto, it relates to your edifice; and signifies, that, if you have abridged your *omnia*, you have, nevertheless, left your VANITAS legible at full length." I am, as ever, your affectionate father,

B. FRANKLIN

1. **Charles the Ninth**—On this passage William Temple Franklin has the following note: "A learned friend of the Editor's has observed to him, that this is a mistake, as *Turkeys* were found in great plenty by Cortes, when he invaded and conquered Mexico, before the time of Charles the Twelfth. That this, and their being brought to old Spain, is mentioned by Peter Martyr of Anghiera, who was Secretary of the Council to the Indies, established immediately after the discovery of America, and *personally acquainted with Columbus*." 12. **pay them justly**—The problem of paying the Continental army was one of the most pressing problems before the country, which had seen, and was to see, mutiny among its troops.

# JOHN WOOLMAN

1720-1772

- 1720 Born October 19, at Ancocas (Rancocas), New Jersey, the son of Samuel and Elizabeth (Burr) Woolman, the fourth of thirteen children.
- 1740-1741 Employed to "tend shop" at Mount Holly, New Jersey. First stirrings of antislavery sentiment.
- 1743-1746 Apprenticeship in tailoring, ending in the setting up of a tailor's shop in Mount Holly.
- 1743 Set apart by the "Monthly Meeting of Burlington" as the Quaker equivalent of a minister.
- 1746 May to August, first visit to Virginia.
- 1747 Death of Elizabeth, his favorite sister. First visit to New England, March-July.
- 1749 Married Sarah Ellis, October 18.
- 1750 Wrote *Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes* (Part II, 1760).
- 1757 Second journey into the Southern colonies (May-July).
- 1758 Wrote *Considerations on Pure Wisdom and Human Policy*.
- 1760 Journey through Long Island and into New England (April to August).
- 1763 Wrote *A Plea for the Poor* (published, 1793). Visited the Indians.
- 1765-1768 Various journeys through New Jersey and Maryland.
- 1769 Preparations to visit the West Indies ended by illness.
- 1770 Published *Considerations on the True Harmony of Mankind*.
- 1772 May 1, sailed for England. Died October 7, at York, of the smallpox.
- 1774 (and 1775) *The Works of John Woolman* published, including the *Journal*, begun in 1765.

BIOGRAPHIES: W. Teignmouth Shore, *John Woolman: His Life and Our Times*, Macmillan, 1913; Frank Vigor Morley, *The Tailor of Mount Holly: John Woolman*, London, Friends Book Center, 1926; Janet Whitney, *John Woolman: American Quaker*, Atlantic Monthly Press, 1942. There is an excellent brief life prefixed to Amelia M. Gummere's edition of the *Journal*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND EDITIONS: The best edition of the *Journal of John Woolman* is that edited by Amelia M. Gummere, Macmillan, 1922. Excellent also is Vida D. Scudder, ed., *The Journal and Other Writings of John Woolman*, Everyman's Library, 1910. The best bibliographies are those in Gummere and Whitney, noted above, but see also *Literary History of the United States*, Vol. III, pp. 787-88.

From the persecution of the Quakers in seventeenth-century New England to the publication by the Yale University Press in 1949 of *The United States and the Soviet Union: Some Quaker Proposals for Peace*, the Society of Friends has made an impress upon American thought and culture out of proportion to their modest fraction

of the total population in any decade. Not to speak of Whittier, the Quaker tradition touches Whitman among the greater figures, and among the lesser, the literary history of Pennsylvania bears witness to their work. Among writers of more than national fame John Woolman, whose *Journal* Charles Lamb extravagantly admired, must always be counted—indeed, it is said his renown is greater in England than it is in the United States. Aside from his formulation of antislavery sentiments, his proposals for the poor, his plea for sectarian tolerance, and his modesty and self-respect, Woolman is important for his stylistic excellence—his prose is as limpid as spring water—and for the sweetness of his religious mysticism, never possessing the well-nigh sensual qualities of other mystics, but always firm in its trust in the Divine purposes. His *Journal* is also especially valuable because while it traces the development of a mystic, it never loses sure contact with the practical business of the world. Along with Jonathan Edwards, the great Puritan, John Woolman, the great Friend, is America's best contribution to religious autobiography.

### [THE EDUCATION OF A QUAKER]

The selection from John Woolman, here reprinted, is Chapter I of *A Journal of the Life and Travels of John Woolman, in the Service of the Gospel*. The text of the *Journal* presents certain complications, but that here given is from the *Works of John Woolman in Two Parts*, published in London, 1795, the particular edition followed being that got out by T. Letchworth. Apparently other London booksellers simultaneously, or almost simultaneously, set up their own "copy," the result being that the edition of the *Journal* in Everyman's Library, though it also depends upon a London text, differs in a variety of ways (punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, and spelling) from the one here presented. The title used has been given in order to call attention to the fact that virtually all of Woolman's mature interests appeared before he was twenty-four years old.

**I** HAVE often felt a motion of love to leave some hints in writing of my experience of the goodness of God; and now, in the thirty-sixth year of my age, I begin this work.

- I was born in Northampton, in Burlington county, West-Jersey, in the year  
 5 1720; and before I was seven years old I began to be acquainted with the operations of divine love. Through the care of my parents, I was taught to read nearly as soon as I was capable of it; and, as I went from school one seventh day, I remember, while my companions went to play by the way, I went forward out of sight, and, sitting down, I read the 22d chapter of the Revela-  
 10 tions. "He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as chrystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the lamb, &c." and, in reading it, my mind was drawn to seek after that pure habitation, which, I then believed, God had prepared for his servants. The place where I sat, and the sweetness that attended my mind, remain fresh in my memory.
- 15 This, and the like gracious visitations, had that effect upon me, that when boys used ill language it troubled me; and, through the continued mercies of God, I was preserved from it.

4. West-Jersey—New Jersey was originally composed of East Jersey and West Jersey, and commonly referred to as "The Jerseys." 9-10. 22d . . . Revelations—Rev. 22:1.

The pious instructions of my parents were often fresh in my mind when I happened to be among wicked children, and were of use to me. My parents, having a large family of children, used frequently, on first days after meeting, to put us to read in the holy scriptures, or some religious books, one after another, the rest sitting by without much conversation; which, I have since often thought, was a good practice. From what I had read and heard, I believed there had been, in past ages, people who walked in uprightness before God, in a degree exceeding any that I knew, or heard of, now living: and the apprehension of there being less steadiness and firmness, amongst people in this age than in past ages, often troubled me while I was a child.

A thing remarkable in my childhood was, that once, going to a neighbour's house, I saw, on the way, a robin sitting on her nest, and as I came near she went off, but, having young ones, flew about, and with many cries expressed her concern for them; I stood and threw stones at her, till, one striking her, she fell down dead: at first I was pleased with the exploit, but after a few minutes was seized with horror, as having, in a sportive way, killed an innocent creature while she was careful for her young: I beheld her lying dead, and thought those young ones, for which she was so careful, must now perish for want of their dam to nourish them; and, after some painful considerations on the subject, I climbed up the tree, took all the young birds, and killed them; supposing that better than to leave them to pine away and die miserably: and believed, in this case, that scripture-proverb was fulfilled, "The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." I then went on my errand, but, for some hours, could think of little else but the cruelties I had committed, and was much troubled. Thus He, whose tender mercies are over all his works, hath placed a principle in the human mind, which incites to exercise goodness towards every living creature; and this being singly attended to, people become tender-hearted and sympathising; but, being frequently and totally rejected, the mind becomes shut up in a contrary disposition.

About the twelfth year of my age, my father being abroad, my mother reproved me for some misconduct, to which I made an undutiful reply; and, the next first day, as I was with my father returning from meeting, he told me he understood I had behaved amiss to my mother, and advised me to be more careful in future. I knew myself blameable, and in shame and confusion remained silent. Being thus awakened to a sense of my wickedness, I felt remorse in my mind, and, getting home, I retired and prayed to the Lord to forgive me; and do not remember that I ever, after that, spoke unhandsomely to either of my parents, however foolish in some other things.

Having attained the age of sixteen years, I began to love wanton company; and though I was preserved from profane language, or scandalous conduct, still I perceived a plant in me which produced much wild grapes; yet my merciful Father forsook me not utterly, but, at times, through his grace, I was brought seriously to consider my ways; and the sight of my backslidings affected me with sorrow; but, for want of rightly attending to the reproofs of

3. **first days . . . meeting**—Quaker expressions. "First day" is Sunday, and "meeting" is a church meeting for religious purposes. 22. **tender mercies**—cf. Prov. 12:10. 27. **singly**—in the sense of uninterruptedly. 39. **wanton**—in the sense of light-hearted.



instruction, vanity was added to vanity, and repentance to repentance: upon the whole, my mind was more and more alienated from the truth, and I hastened toward destruction. While I meditate on the gulph towards which I travelled, and reflect on my youthful disobedience, for these things I weep,  
 5 mine eyes run down with water.

Advancing in age, the number of my acquaintances increased, and thereby my way grew more difficult; though I had found comfort in reading the holy scriptures, and thinking on heavenly things, I was now estranged therefrom: I knew I was going from the flock of Christ, and had no resolution to return;  
 10 hence serious reflections were uneasy to me, and youthful vanities and diversions my greatest pleasure. Running in this road I found many like myself; and we associated in that which is the reverse to true friendship.

But in this swift race it pleased God to visit me with sickness, so that I doubted of recovering; and then did darkness, horror, and amazement, with  
 15 full force, seize me, even when my pain and distress of body was very great. I thought it would have been better for me never to have had a being, than to see the day which I now saw. I was filled with confusion; and in great affliction, both of mind and body, I lay and <sup>would never</sup> bewailed myself. I had not confidence to lift up my cries to God, whom I had thus offended; but, in a deep sense  
 20 of my great folly, I was humbled before him; and, at length, that word which is as a fire and a hammer, broke and dissolved my rebellious heart, and then my cries were put up in contrition; and in the multitude of his mercies I found inward relief, and felt a close engagement, that, if he was pleased to restore my health, I might walk humbly before him.

After my recovery, this exercise remained with me a considerable time; but, by degrees, giving way to youthful vanities, they gained strength, and, getting with wanton young people, I lost ground. The Lord had been very gracious, and spoke peace to me in the time of my distress; and I now most ungratefully turned again to folly; on which account, at times, I felt sharp  
 30 reproof. I was not so <sup>gay</sup> hardy as to commit things scandalous; but to exceed in vanity, and promote <sup>gayety</sup> mirth, was my chief study. Still I retained a love for pious people, and their company brought an awe upon me. My dear parents, several times, admonished me in the fear of the Lord, and their admonition entered into my heart, and had a good effect for a season; but, not getting  
 35 deep enough to pray rightly, the tempter, when he came, found entrance. I remember once, having spent a part of the day in wantonness, as I went to bed at night, there lay in a window, near my bed, a Bible, which I opened, and first cast my eye on this text, "We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covers us": this I knew to be my case: and, meeting with so unexpected  
 40 a reproof, I was somewhat affected with it, and went to bed under remorse of conscience; which I soon cast off again.

Thus time passed on: my heart was replenished with mirth and wantonness, and pleasing scenes of vanity were presented to my imagination, till I attained the age of eighteen years; near which time I felt the judgements of  
 45 God, in my soul, like a consuming fire; and, looking over my past life, the prospect was moving.—I was often sad, and longed to be delivered from those

vanities; then again, my heart was strongly inclined to them, and there was in me a sore conflict: at times I turned to folly, and then again, sorrow and confusion took hold of me. In a while, I resolved totally to leave off some of my vanities; but there was a secret reserve, in my heart, of the more refined part of them, and I was not low enough to find true peace. Thus, for some months, I had great troubles; there remaining in me an unsubjected will, which rendered my labours fruitless, till at length, through the merciful continuance of heavenly visitations, I was made to bow down in spirit before the Lord. I remember one evening I had spent some time in reading a pious author; and walking out alone, I humbly prayed to the Lord for his help, that I might be delivered from all those vanities which so ensnared me. Thus, being brought low, he helped me; and, as I learned to bear the cross, I felt refreshment to come from his presence; but, not keeping in that strength which gave victory, I lost ground again; the sense of which greatly affected me: and I sought deserts and lonely places, and there, with tears, did confess my sins to God, and humbly craved help of him. And I may say, with reverence, he was near to me in my troubles, and in those times of humiliation opened my ear to discipline. I was now led to look seriously at the means by which I was drawn from the pure truth, and learned this, that, if I would live in the life which the faithful servants of God lived in, I must not go into company as heretofore in my own will; but all the cravings of sense must be governed by a divine principle. In times of sorrow and <sup>lowering</sup> abasement these instructions were sealed upon me, and I felt the power of Christ prevail over selfish desires, so that I was preserved in a good degree of steadiness; and, being young, and believing at that time that a single life was best for me, I was strengthened to keep from such company as had often been a snare to me.

I kept steadily to meetings; spent first day afternoons chiefly in reading the scriptures and other good books; and was early convinced, in my mind, that true religion consisted in an inward life, wherein the heart doth love and reverence God the Creator, and learns to exercise true justice and goodness, not only toward all men, but also toward the brute creatures.—That as the mind was moved, by an inward principle, to love God as an invisible incomprehensible Being, by the same principle it was moved to love him in all his manifestations in the visible world.—That, as by his breath the flame of life was kindled in all animal sensible creatures, to say we love God, and, at the same time exercise cruelty toward the least creature, is a contradiction in itself.

I found no narrowness respecting sects and opinions; but believed, that sincere upright-hearted people, in every society who truly love God, were accepted of him.

As I lived under the cross, and simply followed the openings of truth, my mind, from day to day, was more enlightened; my former acquaintance were left to judge of me as they would, for I found it safest for me to live in private, and keep these things sealed up in my own breast. While I silently ponder on that change wrought in me, I find no language equal to it, nor any means to convey to another a clear idea of it. I looked upon the works of God in this visible creation, and an awfulness covered me; my heart was tender and often

contrite, and universal love to my fellow-creatures increased in me: this will be understood by such as have trodden the same path. Some glances of real beauty may be seen in their faces, who dwell in true meekness.

- There is a harmony in the sound of that voice to which divine love gives  
 5 utterance, and some appearance of right order in their temper and conduct, whose passions are regulated; yet all these do not fully shew forth that inward life to such as have not felt it: But this white stone and new name is known rightly to such only as have it.

- Though I have been thus strengthened to bear the cross, I still found myself  
 10 in great danger, having many weaknesses attending me, and strong temptations to wrestle with; in the feeling whereof I frequently withdrew into private places, and often with tears besought the Lord to help me, whose gracious ear was open to my cry.

- All this time I lived with my parents, and wrought on the plantation; and,  
 15 having had schooling pretty well for a planter, I used to improve it in winter-evenings, and other leisure times; and, being now in the twenty-first year of my age, a man, in much business at shop-keeping and baking, asked me, if I would hire with him to tend shop and keep books. I acquainted my father with the proposal; and, after some deliberation, it was agreed for me to go.

- At home I had lived retired; and now, having a prospect of being much in  
 20 the way of company, I felt frequent and fervent cries in my heart to God, the father of mercies, that he would preserve me from all corruption; that in this more publick employment, I might serve him, my gracious Redeemer, in that humility and self-denial, with which I had been, in a small degree, exercised in  
 25 a more private life. The man, who employed me, furnished a shop in Mount-Holly, about five miles from my father's house, and six from his own; and there I lived alone, and tended his shop. Shortly after my settlement here I was visited by several young people, my former acquaintance, who knew not but vanities would be as agreeable to me now as ever; and, at these times, I  
 30 cried to the Lord, in secret, for wisdom and strength; for I felt myself encompassed with difficulties, and had fresh occasion to bewail the follies of time past, in contracting a familiarity with ~~libertine~~ <sup>the world</sup> people: and, as I had now left my father's house outwardly, I found my heavenly Father to be merciful to me beyond what I can express.

- By day I was much amongst people, and had many trials to go through; but,  
 35 in the evenings, I was mostly alone, and may with thankfulness acknowledge, that, in those times, the spirit of supplication was often poured upon me; under which I was frequently exercised, and felt my strength renewed.

- In a few months after I came here, my master bought several Scotchmen,  
 40 servants from on-board a vessel, and brought them to Mount-Holly to sell; one of which was taken sick, and died.

In the latter part of his sickness, he, being delirious, used to curse and swear most sorrowfully; and, the next night after his burial, I was left to sleep alone in the same chamber where he died; I perceived in me a timorousness; I knew,

7. white stone.—cf. Rev. 2:17. 14. plantation—farm. 39. bought . . . Scotchmen—that is, the Scotchmen were indentured servants who, in order to pay their passage to America, sold their time, usually for a period of four years, to anybody who would hire them. This indenture was transferable by sale.

however, I had not injured the man, but assisted in taking care of him according to my capacity; and was not free to ask any one, on that occasion, to sleep with me: nature was feeble; but every trial was a fresh incitement to give myself up wholly to the service of God, for I found no helper like him in times of trouble. After a while, my former acquaintance gave over expecting me as one of their company; and I began to be known to some whose conversation was helpful to me: and now, as I had experienced the love of God, through Jesus Christ, to redeem me from many pollutions, and to be a succour to me through a sea of conflicts, with which no person was fully acquainted; and as my heart was often enlarged in this heavenly principle, I felt a tender compassion for the youth, who remained entangled in snares, likes those which had entangled me from one time to another: this love and tenderness increased; and my mind was more strongly engaged for the good of my fellow-creatures. I went to meetings in an awful frame of mind, and endeavoured to be inwardly acquainted with the language of the true Shepherd; and, one day, being under a strong exercise of spirit, I stood up, and said some words in a meeting; but, not keeping close to the divine opening, I said more than was required of me; and being soon sensible of my error, I was afflicted in mind some weeks, without any light or comfort, even to that degree that I could not take satisfaction in any thing: I remembered God, and was troubled, and, in the depth of my distress, he had pity upon me, and sent the Comforter: I then felt forgiveness for my offence, and my mind became calm and quiet, being truly thankful to my gracious Redeemer for his mercies; and, after this, feeling the spring of divine love opened, and a concern to speak, I said a few words in a meeting, in which I found peace; this, I believe, was about six weeks from the first time: and, as I was thus humbled and disciplined under the cross, my understanding became more strengthened to distinguish the pure spirit which inwardly moves upon the heart, and taught me to wait in silence sometimes many weeks together, until I felt that rise which prepares the creature.

From an inward purifying, and stedfast abiding under it, springs a lively operative desire for the good of others: all the faithful are not called to the public ministry; but whoever are, are called to minister of that which they have tasted and handled spiritually. The outward modes of worship are various; but, wherever any are true ministers of Jesus Christ, it is from the operation of his spirit upon their hearts, first purifying them, and thus giving them a just sense of the conditions of others.

This truth was clearly fixed in my mind; and I was taught to watch the pure opening, and to take heed, lest, while I was standing to speak, my own will should get uppermost, and cause me to utter words from worldly wisdom, and depart from the channel of the true gospel-ministry.

In the management of my outward affairs, I may say, with thankfulness, I found truth to be my support; and I was respected in my master's family, who came to live in Mount-Holly within two years after my going there.

About the twenty-third year of my age, I had many fresh and heavenly openings, in respect to the care and providence of the Almighty over his creatures

14. **awful**—solemn. 24. **concern**—A “concern,” to the Quakers, is an irresistible inward demand.

in general, and over man as the most noble amongst those which are visible. And being clearly convinced in my judgement, that to place my whole trust in God was best for me, I felt renewed engagements, that in all things I might act on an inward principle of virtue, and pursue worldly business no farther,

5 than as truth opened my way therein.

About the time called Christmas, I observed many people from the country, and dwellers in town, who, resorting to public-houses, spent their time in drinking and vain sports, tending to corrupt one another; on which account I was much troubled. At one house, in particular, there was much disorder; and I  
 10 believed it was a duty incumbent <sup>being obliged</sup> on me to go and speak to the master of that house. I considered I was young, and that several elderly friends in town had opportunity to see these things; but though I would gladly have been excused, yet I could not feel my mind clear.

The exercise was heavy: and as I was reading what the Almighty said to  
 15 Ezekiel, respecting his duty as a watchman, the matter was set home more clearly; and then, with prayers and tears, I besought the Lord for his assistance, who in loving-kindness, gave me a resigned heart: then, at a suitable opportunity, I went to the public-house; and, seeing the man amongst much company, I went to him, and told him, I wanted to speak with him; so we went  
 20 aside, and, there, in the fear of the Almighty, I expressed to him what rested on my mind; which he took kindly, and afterward shewed more regard to me than before. In a few years afterwards he died, middle-aged; and I often thought that, had I neglected my duty in that case, it would have given me great trouble; and I was humbly thankful to my gracious Father, who had  
 25 supported me herein.

My employer having a negro woman, sold her, and desired me to write a bill of sale, the man being waiting who bought her: the thing was sudden; and, though the thoughts of writing an instrument of slavery for one of my fellow-creatures felt uneasy, yet I remembered I was hired by the year, that it  
 30 was my master who directed me to do it, and that it was an elderly man, a member of our society, who bought her; so, through weakness, I gave way, and wrote; but, at the executing it, I was so afflicted in my mind, that I said, before my master and the friend, that I believed slave-keeping to be a practice inconsistent with the Christian religion: this in some degree abated my uneasiness; yet, as often as I reflected seriously upon it, I thought I should have been  
 35 clearer, if I had desired to have been excused from it, as a thing against my conscience; for such it was. And, some time after this; a young man, of our society, spoke to me to write a conveyance of a slave to him, he having lately taken a negro into his house: I told him I was not easy to write it; for, though  
 40 many of our meeting and in other places kept slaves, I still believed the practice was not right, and desired to be excused from the writing. I spoke to him in good will; and he told me that keeping slaves was not altogether agreeable to his mind; but that the slave being a gift to his wife, he had accepted of her.

14. exercise—task. 15. Ezekiel—cf. Ezek. 4:17. 31. society—The Society of Friends, i.e., the Quakers. 33. friend—Quaker.

# THOMAS PAINE

1737-1809

## I. FAILURE (1737-1774)

- 1737 January 29, born at Thetford, England, the only son of Joseph and Frances Cocke Paine, the father being a Quaker stay-maker. Attended local grammar school.
- 1750-1754 Worked in father's shop; attempted to enlist on a privateer.
- 1756 Shipped on privateer *King of Prussia*; returned to London.
- 1758 Living in Dover.
- 1759 Living as a master stay-maker in Sandwich, Kent. September 27, married Mary Lambert, who died 1760.
- 1760 Living in Margate.
- 1764 December 1, appointed an officer in the excise; dismissed some time about 1766.
- 1768 February 19, reappointed an excise officer in Lewes, Sussex.
- 1771 March 26, married Elizabeth Ollive upon the death of her father, a tobacconist. Paine took over the business.
- 1772 Wrote *The Case of the Officers of the Excise*, an appeal to Parliament, not formally published until 1793. Lived mostly in London during the winter.
- 1774 April, Paine bankrupt. June, separated from wife for unknown reasons. August, dismissed from the excise. October, left for America at Franklin's suggestion, arriving November 30 at Philadelphia.

## II. THE AMERICAN PATRIOT (1774-1787)

- 1775-1776 Associated with *The Pennsylvania Magazine or American Museum*, which he edited; contributed also to the *Pennsylvania Journal*. Paine now began that career of incessant propaganda, the collected results of which fill ten volumes of his *Works*.
- 1776 January 10, *Common Sense* published. Paine enlisted in a Pennsylvania division. September 19, appointed aide-de-camp to General Greene. December 19, published the first number of *The American Crisis*, reprinted as a pamphlet after appearing in the *Pennsylvania Journal*. The sixteenth and last *Crisis* appeared December 9, 1783.
- 1777 January 21, appointed secretary to a commission to treat with the Pennsylvania Indians. April 17, elected secretary of the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the Continental Congress.
- 1778 Autumn, Paine involved in attacks on Silas Deane, American commissioner to France.
- 1779 January 8, resigned as secretary. November 2, elected clerk of the Pennsylvania Assembly.

- 1780 July 4, made a Master of Arts by the University of Philadelphia. October, published *The Crisis Extraordinary*.
- 1781 February, sailed with Colonel John Laurens for France to negotiate a loan for the American cause, returning August 25.
- 1783 Having published much propaganda for the union of the colonies, Paine visited Rhode Island in that cause. Bought a house at Bordentown, New Jersey. Determined to devote himself to invention. During this period Paine received various gifts from Congress and the states, some in partial payment of services.
- 1785 Invented a smokeless candle.
- 1786 June, perfected models of an iron bridge without piers.
- 1787 April, sailed for France, arriving in May.

### III. THE CITIZEN OF THE WORLD (1787-1802)

- 1787 May, visited Jefferson in Paris. Went to Thetford, returned to Paris, and went back to England in the autumn.
- 1788 August, British government granted a patent on his bridge.
- 1789 First bridge built under Paine's patent, later put in place June, 1790. Paine intimate with Whig leaders in London.
- 1790 Visited Paris to observe the Revolution. Given a key of the Bastille, which he sent to Washington after returning to London.
- 1791 February (and again in March) published *The Rights of Man* (Part I) in reply to Burke's *Reflections on the Late Revolution in France* (1789). Paine spent much of the year in Paris, where he was active in a republican club.
- 1792 February 17, Part II of *The Rights of Man* published. June 8, Paine summoned to stand trial as the author of a libelous work. The trial being postponed, Paine went secretly to Paris. September 6, he had been elected a member of the French Convention from Calais and three other departments. Took his seat September 21. October 11, appointed to the committee on drafting a constitution. December, outlawed from England.
- 1793 January 20, Paine attempted to speak against the execution of Louis XVI, incurring the hatred of the radicals. In October the fall of the Moderate (Girondin) party led to Paine's arrest December 27. Imprisoned in the Luxembourg. Part I of *The Age of Reason* written.
- 1794 January 27, Part I of *The Age of Reason* published. November 4, released from prison through the efforts of Monroe. Paine desperately ill.
- 1795 Paine convalescent at the Monroe home. Part II of *The Age of Reason* published. September 20, wrote *Letter to George Washington*.
- 1802 September 1, returned to America through the efforts of Jefferson, arriving at Baltimore October 30.

### IV. OBLOQUY (1802-1809)

- 1802 Paine returned to feel the effects of the religious reaction in America, which branded him as an atheist. Lived at Bordentown, and then in New York City.
- 1805 January, living at New Rochelle, where an attempt was made to assassinate him. During these years Paine struggled to have his just claims on the American government recognized.
- 1806 In desperate financial straits and poor health. Denied opportunity to vote at New Rochelle on the ground he was not an American citizen.
- 1807 Part III of *The Age of Reason* published.

1808 Living in New York City in broken health.

1809 June 8, died in New York City.

**BIOGRAPHIES:** Most of the earlier lives are violently biased and inaccurate. The standard life is M. D. Conway, *Life of Thomas Paine*, Putnam, 1892, 2 vols. Later lives are by Van der Weyde (edition listed below), M. A. Best (Harcourt, Brace, 1927), Hesketh Pearson (Harper, 1937), Frank Smith (Stokes, 1938), and W. E. Woodward (Dutton, 1945).

**BIBLIOGRAPHY AND EDITIONS:** There is no standard bibliography but see *Literary History of the United States*, Vol. III, pp. 674-78. No collected edition is wholly satisfactory. See *The Writings of Thomas Paine*, ed. by M. D. Conway, Putnam, 1894-96, 4 vols.; *The Life and Works of Thomas Paine*, ed. by W. M. Van der Weyde, Thomas Paine National History Association, 1925, 10 vols. *Complete Writings*, ed. P. S. Foner, Citadel Press, 1945, 2 vols. *Selections from the Works of Thomas Paine*, ed. by A. W. Peach, Harcourt, Brace, 1928, and *Representative Selections from Thomas Paine*, ed. by H. H. Clark (American Writers Series) American Book Co., 1944, are good.

"The morning star of the Revolution," "the ragged philosopher," "a filthy little atheist"—such are some of the epithets that have been applied to him who is affectionately known as Tom Paine. No author in the roll of American writers has had a more striking success, or suffered so deeply from ingratitude and slander. A citizen of three nations, he was outlawed from England, imprisoned and in fear of death in France, and, though the greatest propagandist of the American Revolution, denied recognition in his later years as a national of the Republic. His writings (from which he received almost nothing) are among the most widely circulated productions of eighteenth-century authorship, and he died neglected by the country for which he had done so much, and relatively unknown.

The obloquy that he suffered was due to *The Age of Reason*, which happened to appear in the epoch of religious reaction following the French Revolution, and which, because of its outspoken attacks on Christianity, aroused the ire of the conservatives. Stripped of its hostility to the Bible, *The Age of Reason* is, however, nothing more than a statement of deistic principles in the light of the scientific theory of its day, and contains nothing which had not been formulated by others. Similarly, *The Rights of Man*, which drew down upon Paine the wrath of the English government, is simply a striking exposition of republican principles; the animus aroused by the pamphlets is due to Paine's outspoken attack on monarchical government. And the *Crisis* papers are a summation of what the radical element had been saying in America, mixed in with much propaganda designed to keep alive the courage of the Revolutionists.

If Paine is not an original thinker, he is none the less a striking and original writer. His genius lay in absorbing the ideas that others were fumbling to express, and in stating them in bold, direct, and unmistakable language which rises at times to eloquence, and which is studded with pithy epigrams. As a pamphleteer he is without his equal in American literature, and as a propagandist for the ideas he believed in, one of the three or four most influential in the history of the world. In him eighteenth-century prose in America reaches a pitch of clarity, force, and persuasiveness which his occasional syntactical infelicities do little to harm. Deism and republicanism never had a more eloquent advocate.

The text of Paine offers great difficulties owing to his liberality and carelessness in allowing his work to be pirated and reprinted; the tangle of editions has never been thoroughly straightened out. The editors base the text of the selections here given on that used by Professor Arthur W. Peach in his *Selections from Thomas Paine*.



## THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT STATE OF AMERICAN AFFAIRS

*Thoughts on the Present State of American Affairs* forms the third part of *Common Sense*, published January 10(?), 1776. The first two parts discuss the origin and design of government in general with special reference to the English constitution and the principles of monarchy and hereditary succession. As the text indicates, Paine is throwing his weight into the scale of a declaration of independence, which came in the following July.

IN THE following pages I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense: and have no other preliminaries to settle with the reader, than that he will divest himself of prejudice and prepossession, and suffer his reason and his feelings to determine for themselves: that he will  
5 put on, or rather that he will not put off, the true character of a man, and generously enlarge his views beyond the present day.

Volumes have been written on the subject of the struggle between England and America. Men of all ranks have embarked in the controversy, from different motives, and with various designs; but all have been ineffectual, and the period  
10 of debate is closed. Arms as the last resource decide the contest; the appeal was the choice of the King, and the continent has accepted the challenge.

It hath been reported of the late Mr. Pelham (who tho' an able minister was not without his faults) that on his being attacked in the House of Commons on the score that his measures were only of a temporary kind, replied, "*they will*  
15 *last my time.*" Should a thought so fatal and unmanly possess the Colonies in the present contest, the name of Ancestors will be remembered by future generations with detestation.

The Sun never shined on a cause of greater worth. 'Tis not the affair of a City, a County, a Province, or a Kingdom; but of a Continent—of at least one eighth  
20 part of the habitable globe. 'Tis not the concern of a day, a year, or an age; posterity are virtually involved in the contest, and will be more or less affected even to the end of time by the proceedings now. Now is the seed time of continental union, faith and honor. The least fracture now will be like a name engraved with the point of a pin on the tender rind of a young oak; the wound  
25 would enlarge with the tree, and posterity read it in full grown characters.

By referring the matter from argument to arms, a new æra for politics is struck—a new method of thinking has arisen. All plans, proposals, &c. prior to the nineteenth of April, i. e. to the commencement of hostilities, are like the almanacks of the last year; which though proper then, are superseded and use-  
30 less now. Whatever was advanced by the advocates on either side of the question then, terminated in one and the same point, viz. a union with Great Britain; the only difference between the parties was the method of effecting it; the one proposing force, the other friendship; but it has so far happened that the first has failed, and the second has withdrawn her influence.

12. Mr. Pelham—Henry Pelham (1695?-1754), Prime Minister of England (1744-54) and typical of the older corrupt method of administration. 28. nineteenth of April—date of the Battle of Lexington.

As much has been said of the advantages of reconciliation, which, like an agreeable dream, has passed away and left us as we were, it is but right that we should examine the contrary side of the argument, and enquire into some of the many material injuries which these Colonies sustain, and always will sustain, by being connected with and dependant on Great Britain. To examine that connection and dependance, on the principles of nature and common sense, to see what we have to trust to, if separated, and what we are to expect, if dependant.

I have heard it asserted by some, that as America has flourished under her former connection with Great Britain, the same connection is necessary towards her future happiness, and will always have the same effect.—Nothing can be more fallacious than this kind of argument.—We may as well assert that because a child has thrived upon milk, that it is never to have meat, or that the first twenty years of our lives is to become a precedent for the next twenty. But even this is admitting more than is true; for I answer roundly, that America would have flourished as much, and probably much more, had no European power taken any notice of her. The commerce by which she hath enriched herself are the necessities of life, and will always have a market while eating is the custom of Europe.

But she has protected us, say some. That she hath engrossed us is true, and defended the Continent at our expence as well as her own, is admitted; and she would have defended Turkey from the same motive, *viz.* for the sake of trade and dominion.

Alas! we have been long led away by ancient prejudices and made large sacrifices to superstition. We have boasted the protection of Great Britain, without considering, that her motive was *interest* not *attachment*; and that she did not protect us from *our enemies* on *our account*, but from her enemies on her own account, from those who had no quarrel with us on any *other account*, and who will always be our enemies on the *same account*. Let Britain waive her pretensions to the continent, or the continent throw off the dependance, and we should be at peace with France and Spain were they at war with Britain. The miseries of Hanover's last war ought to warn us against connections.

It hath lately been asserted in Parliament, that the colonies have no relation to each other but through the parent country, i. e. that Pennsylvania and the Jerseys, and so on for the rest, are sister colonies by the way of England; this is certainly a very roundabout way of proving relationship, but it is the nearest and only true way of proving enmity (or enemyship, if I may so call it). France and Spain never were, nor perhaps ever will be, our enemies as *Americans*, but as our being the *subjects of Great Britain*.

But Britain is the parent country, say some. Then the more shame upon her conduct. Even brutes do not devour their young, nor savages make war upon their families; wherefore, the assertion, if true, turns to her reproach; but it happens not to be true, or only partly so, and the phrase *parent* or *mother*

32. **Hanover's last war**—During the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), Hanover, the king of which was also King of Great Britain until the reign of Victoria, was repeatedly overrun by the French. 34-35. **the Jerseys**—See note 3, p. 100.

*country* hath been jesuitically adopted by the King and his parasites, with a low papistical design of gaining an unfair bias on the credulous weakness of our minds. Europe, and not England, is the parent country of America. This new world hath been the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty from *every part* of Europe. Hither have they fled, not from the tender embraces of the mother, but from the cruelty of the monster; and it is so far true of England, that the same tyranny which drove the first emigrants from home, pursues their descendants still.

In this extensive quarter of the globe, we forget the narrow limits of three hundred and sixty miles (the extent of England) and carry our friendship on a larger scale; we claim brotherhood with every European Christian, and triumph in the generosity of the sentiment.

It is pleasant to observe by what regular gradations we surmount the force of local prejudices, as we enlarge our acquaintance with the world. A man born in any town in England divided into parishes, will naturally associate most with his fellow parishioners (because their interests in many cases will be common) and distinguish him by the name of *neighbor*; if he meet him but a few miles from home, he drops the narrow idea of a street, and salutes him by the name of *townsman*; if he travel out of the county and meet him in any other, he forgets the minor divisions of street and town, and calls him *countryman*, *i. e. countyman*; but if in their foreign excursions they should associate in France, or any other part of *Europe*, their local remembrance would be enlarged into that of *Englishmen*. And by a just <sup>equality</sup> parity of reasoning, all Europeans meeting in America, or any other quarter of the globe, are *countrymen*; for England, Holland, Germany, or Sweden, when compared with the whole, stand in the same places on the larger scale, which the divisions of street, town, and county do on the smaller ones; Distinctions too limited for Continental minds. Not one third of the inhabitants, even of this province, are of English descent. Wherefore, I <sup>disapprove</sup> ~~reprobate~~ the phrase of parent or mother country applied to England only, as being false, selfish, narrow and ungenerous.

But, admitting that we were all of English descent, what does it amount to? Nothing. Britain, being now an open enemy, extinguishes every other name and title: and to say that reconciliation is our duty, is truly <sup>ridiculous</sup> ~~farfical~~. The first king of England, of the present line (William the Conqueror) was a Frenchman, and half the Peers of England are descendants from the same country; wherefore, by the same method of reasoning, England ought to be governed by France.

Much hath been said of the united strength of Britain and the Colonies, that in conjunction they might bid defiance to the world: But this is mere presumption, the fate of war is uncertain, neither do the expressions mean any thing; for this Continent would never suffer itself to be drained of inhabitants, to support the British arms in either Asia, Africa or Europe.

Besides, what have we to do with setting the world at defiance? Our plan is commerce, and that, well attended to, will secure us the peace and friendship of all Europe; because it is the interest of all Europe to have America a *free*

2. papistical—here, cunning. 28. this province—Pennsylvania.

*port.* Her trade will always be a protection, and her barrenness of gold and silver secure her from invaders.

I challenge the warmest advocate for reconciliation to show a single advantage that this Continent can reap by being connected with Great Britain. I repeat the challenge, not a single advantage is derived. Our corn will fetch its price in any market in Europe, and our imported goods must be paid for by them where we will. 5

But the injuries and disadvantages which we sustain by that connection, are without number; and our duty to mankind at large, as well as to ourselves, instruct us to renounce the alliance: Because, any submission to, or dependance on, Great Britain, tends directly to involve this Continent in European wars and quarrels, and set us at variance with nations who would otherwise seek our friendship, and against whom we have neither anger nor complaint. As Europe is our market for trade, we ought to form no partial connection with any part of it. 'Tis the true interest of America to steer clear of European contentions, which she never can do, while by her dependance on Britain, she is made the make-weight in the scale of British politics. 10 15

Europe is too thickly planted with kingdoms to be long at peace, and whenever a war breaks out between England and any foreign power, the trade of America goes to ruin, *because of her connection with Britain.* The next war may not turn out like the last, and should it not, the advocates for reconciliation now will be wishing for separation then, because neutrality in that case would be a safer convoy than a man of war. Every thing that is right or reasonable pleads for separation. The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature cries, 'TIS TIME TO PART. Even the distance at which the Almighty hath placed England and America is a strong and natural proof that the authority of the one over the other, was never the design of heaven. The time likewise at which the Continent was discovered, adds weight to the argument, and the manner in which it was peopled, encreases the force of it.—The Reformation was preceded by the discovery of America: As if the Almighty graciously meant to open a sanctuary to the persecuted in future years, when home should afford neither friendship nor safety. 20 25 30

The authority of Great Britain over this Continent, is a form of government, which sooner or later must have an end: And a serious mind can draw no true pleasure by looking forward, under the painful and positive conviction that what he calls "the present constitution" is merely temporary. As parents, we can have no joy, knowing that *this government* is not sufficiently lasting to insure any thing which we may bequeath to posterity: And by a plain method of argument, as we are running the next generation into debt, we ought to do the work of it, otherwise we use them meanly and pitifully. In order to discover the line of our duty rightly, we should take our children in our hand, and fix our station a few years farther into life; that eminence will present a prospect which a few present fears and prejudices conceal from our sight. 35 40

**1-2. barrenness of gold and silver**—It should be remembered that the failure to find gold or silver mines on the Atlantic seaboard was one of the principal disappointments of the earlier explorers. **5. corn**—grain. **21. the last**—The Seven Years' War, known in the New World as the French and Indian War, from which Great Britain emerged victorious.

Though I would carefully avoid giving unnecessary offence, yet I am inclined to believe, that all those who espouse the doctrine of reconciliation, may be included within the following descriptions.

- Interested men, who are not to be trusted, weak men who *cannot* see, prejudiced men who *will not* see, and a certain set of moderate men who think better of the European world than it deserves; and this last class, by an ill-judged deliberation, will be the cause of more calamities to this continent than all the other three.

It is the good fortune of many to live distant from the scene of present sorrow; the evil is not sufficiently brought to *their* doors to make *them* feel the precariousness with which all American property is possessed. But let our imaginations transport us a few moments to Boston; that seat of wretchedness will teach us wisdom, and instruct us for ever to renounce a power in whom we can have no trust. The inhabitants of that unfortunate city who but a few months ago were in ease and affluence, have now no other alternative than to stay and starve, or turn out to beg. Endangered by the fire of their friends if they continue within the city, and plundered by the <sup>murderers</sup> ~~soldiers~~ if they leave it, in their present situation they are prisoners without the hope of redemption, and in a general attack for their relief they would be exposed to the fury of both armies.

Men of passive tempers look somewhat lightly over the offences of Great Britain, and, still hoping for the best, are apt to call out, *come, come, we shall be friends again for all this*. But examine the passions and feelings of mankind: Bring the doctrine of reconciliation to the touchstone of nature, and then tell me whether you can hereafter love, honor, and faithfully serve the power that hath carried fire and sword into your land? If you cannot do all these, then are you only deceiving yourselves, and by your delay bringing ruin upon posterity. Your future connection with Britain, whom you can neither love nor honor, will be forced and unnatural, and being formed only on the plan of present convenience, will in a little time fall into a relapse more wretched than the first. But if you say, you can still pass the violations over, then I ask, Hath your house been burnt? Hath your property been destroyed before your face? Are your wife and children destitute of a bed to lie on, or bread to live on? Have you lost a parent or a child by their hands, and yourself the ruined and wretched survivor? If you have not, then are you not a judge of those who have. But if you have, and can still shake hands with the murderers, then are you unworthy the name of husband, father, friend, or lover, and whatever may be your rank or title in life, you have the heart of a coward, and the spirit of a sycophant. *parasite*.

This is not inflaming or exaggerating matters, but trying them by those feelings and affections which nature justifies, and without which we should be incapable of discharging the social duties of life, or enjoying the felicities of it. I mean not to exhibit horror for the purpose of provoking revenge, but to awaken us from fatal and unmanly slumbers, that we may pursue determinately some fixed object. 'Tis not in the power of Britain or of Europe to

12. Boston—occupied by British forces until March 17, 1776, and besieged by the Americans.

conquer America, if she doth not conquer herself by *delay* and *timidity*. The present winter is worth an age if rightly employed, but if lost or neglected the whole continent will partake of the misfortune; and there is no punishment which that man doth not deserve, be he who, or what, or where he will, that may be the means of sacrificing a season so precious and useful.

'Tis repugnant to reason, to the universal order of things; to all examples from former ages, to suppose, that this continent can long remain subject to any external power. The most sanguine in Britain doth not think so. The utmost stretch of human wisdom cannot, at this time, compass a plan, short of separation, which can promise the continent even a year's security. Reconciliation is *now* a fallacious dream. Nature has deserted the connection, and art cannot supply her place. For, as Milton wisely expresses, "never can true reconciliation grow where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep."

Every quiet method for peace hath been ineffectual. Our prayers have been rejected with disdain; and hath tended to convince us that nothing flatters vanity or confirms obstinacy in Kings more than repeated petitioning—and nothing hath contributed more than that very measure to make the Kings of Europe absolute. Witness Denmark and Sweden. Wherefore, since nothing but blows will do, for God's sake let us come to a final separation, and not leave the next generation to be cutting throats under the violated unmeaning names of parent and child.

To say they will never attempt it again is idle and visionary; we thought so at the repeal of the stamp act, yet a year or two undeceived us; as well may we suppose that nations which have been once defeated will never renew the quarrel.

As to government matters, 'tis not in the power of Britain to do this Continent justice: the business of it will soon be too weighty and intricate to be managed with any tolerable degree of convenience, by a power so distant from us, and so very ignorant of us; for if they cannot conquer us they cannot govern us. To be always running three or four thousand miles with a tale or a petition, waiting four or five months for an answer, which, when obtained, requires five or six more to explain it in, will in a few years be looked upon as folly and childishness.—There was a time when it was proper, and there is a proper time for it to cease.

Small islands not capable of protecting themselves are the proper objects for government to take under their care; but there is something absurd in supposing a Continent to be perpetually governed by an island. In no instance hath nature made the satellite larger than its primary planet; and as England and America, with respect to each other, reverse the common order of nature, it is evident that they belong to different systems. England to Europe: America to itself.

I am not induced by motives of pride, party or resentment to <sup>embrace</sup> espouse the doctrine of separation and independence; I am clearly, positively, and con-

12. never can—The quotation is from *Paradise Lost*, Bk. IV, lines 98-99. 18. Denmark and Sweden—Both countries had swung over to more autocratic rule in the last part of the eighteenth century. 23. repeal—The Stamp Act was repealed in March, 1766; the Townshend Acts followed in May, 1767.

scientiously persuaded that 'tis the true interest of this continent to be so; that everything short of *that* is mere patchwork, that it can afford no lasting felicity—that it is leaving the sword to our children, and shrinking back at a time when a little more, a little further, would have rendered this continent the  
 5 glory of the earth.

As Britain hath not manifested the least inclination towards a compromise, we may be assured that no terms can be obtained worthy the acceptance of the continent, or any ways equal to the expence of blood and treasure we have been already put to.

- 10 The object contended for, ought always to bear some just proportion to the expence. The removal of North, or the whole detestable junto, is a matter unworthy the millions we have expended. A temporary stoppage of trade was an inconvenience, which would have sufficiently balanced the repeal of all the acts complained of, had such repeals been obtained; but if the whole Continent  
 15 must take up arms, if every man must be a soldier, 'tis scarcely worth our while to fight against a contemptible ministry only. Dearly, dearly do we pay for the repeal of the acts, if that is all we fight for; for, in a just estimation 'tis as great a folly to pay a bunker-hill price for law as for land. As I have always considered the independancy of this Continent, as an event which sooner or later  
 20 must arrive, so from the late rapid progress of the Continent to maturity, the event cannot be far off. Wherefore, on the breaking out of hostilities, it was not worth the while to have disputed a matter which time would have finally redressed, unless we meant to be in earnest: otherwise it is like wasting an estate on a suit at law, to regulate the trespasses of a tenant whose lease is just expir-  
 25 ing. No man was a warmer wisher for a reconciliation than myself, before the fatal nineteenth of April, 1775, but the moment the event of that day was made known, I rejected the hardened, sullen-tempered Pharaoh of England for ever; and disdain the wretch, that with the pretended title of FATHER OF HIS PEOPLE can unfeelingly hear of their slaughter, and composedly sleep with their blood  
 30 upon his soul.

But admitting that matters were now made up, what would be the event? I answer, the ruin of the continent. And that for several reasons.

- First.* The powers of governing still remaining in the hands of the king, he will have a negative over the whole legislation of this Continent. And as he  
 35 hath shown himself such an inveterate enemy to liberty, and discovered such a thirst for arbitrary power, is he, or is he not, a proper person to say to these Colonies, *You shall make no laws but what I please!* And is there any inhabitant of America so ignorant as not to know, that according to what is called the *present Constitution*, this Continent can make no laws but what the  
 40 king gives leave to; and is there any man so unwise as not to see, that (considering what has happened) he will suffer no law to be made here but such as suits his purpose? We may be as effectually enslaved by the want of laws

11. **North**—Frederick North, eighth Baron and second Earl of Guilford (1732-1792), known as Lord North, and Prime Minister during most of the American Revolutionary struggle. 12. **stoppage of trade**—referring to the nonimportation agreements, by which colonial merchants agreed not to import English goods. 18. **bunker-hill price**—The battle of Bunker's Hill was fought June 17, 1775. 27. **hardened** . . . **Pharaoh**—*Cf.* Ex. 7: 13-14 ff.

in America, as by submitting to laws made for us in England. After matters are made up, (as it is called) can there be any doubt, but the whole power of the crown will be exerted to keep this Continent as low and humble as possible? Instead of going forward we shall go backward, or be perpetually quarrelling, or ridiculously petitioning.—We are already greater than the King wishes us to be, and will he not hereafter endeavor to make us less? To bring the matter to one point, Is the power who is jealous of our prosperity, a proper power to govern us? Whoever says *No*, to this question, is an Independent for independency means no more than this, whether we shall make our own laws, or, whether the King, the greatest enemy this Continent hath, or can have, shall tell us *“there shall be no laws but such as I like.”*

But the King, you'll say, has a negative in England; the people there can make no laws without his consent. In point of right and good order, it is something very ridiculous that a youth of twenty-one (which hath often happened) shall say to several millions of people older and wiser than himself, “I forbid this or that act of yours to be law.” But in this place I decline this sort of reply, tho' I will never cease to expose the absurdity of it, and only answer that England being the King's residence, and America not so, makes quite another case. The King's negative here is ten times more dangerous and fatal than it can be in England; for *there* he will scarcely refuse his consent to a bill for putting England into as strong a state of defence as possible, and in America he would never suffer such a bill to be passed.

America is only a secondary object in the system of British politics, England consults the good of *this* country no further that it answers her *own* purpose. Wherefore, her own interest leads her to suppress the growth of *ours* in every case which doth not promote *her* advantage, or in the least interfere with it. A pretty state we should soon be in under such a second-hand government, considering what has happened! Men do not change from enemies to friends by the alteration of a name: And in order to show that reconciliation *now* is a dangerous doctrine, I affirm, *that it would be policy in the king at this time to repeal the acts, for the sake of reinstating himself in the government of the provinces;* In order that HE MAY ACCOMPLISH BY CRAFT AND SUBTLETY, IN THE LONG RUN, WHAT HE CANNOT DO BY FORCE AND VIOLENCE IN THE SHORT ONE. Reconciliation and ruin are nearly related.

*Secondly.* That as even the best terms which we can expect to obtain can amount to no more than a temporary expedient, or a kind of government by guardianship, which can last no longer than till the Colonies come of age, so the general face and state of things in the *interim* will be unsettled and unpromising: Emigrants of property will not choose to come to a country whose form of government hangs but by a thread, and who is every day tottering on the brink of commotion and disturbance: and numbers of the present inhabitants would lay hold of the interval to dispose of their effects, and quit the continent.

But the most powerful of all arguments is, that nothing but independence, *i. e. a continental* form of government, can keep the peace of the continent and preserve it *inviolate* from civil wars. I dread the event of a reconciliation with Britain *now*, as it is more than probable that it will be followed by a revolt some



where or other, the consequences of which may be far more fatal than all malice of Britain.

Thousands are already ruined by British barbarity; (thousands more will probably suffer the same fate.) Those men have other feelings than us who  
 5 have nothing suffered. All they *now* possess is liberty; what they before enjoyed is sacrificed to its service, and having nothing more to lose they disdain submission. Besides, the general temper of the colonies, towards a British government will be like that of a youth who is nearly out of his time; they will care very little about her: And a government which cannot preserve the peace is no  
 10 government at all, and in that case we pay our money for nothing; and pray what is it that Britain can do, whose power will be wholly on paper, should a civil tumult break out the very day after reconciliation? I have heard some men say, many of whom I believe spoke without thinking, that they dreaded an independance, fearing that it would produce civil wars: It is but seldom  
 15 that our first thoughts are truly correct, and that is the case here; for there is ten times more to dread from a patched up connection than from independance. I make the sufferer's case my own, and I protest, that were I driven from house and home, my property destroyed, and my circumstances ruined, that as a man, sensible of injuries, I could never relish the doctrine of reconciliation, or consider myself bound thereby.

The colonies have manifested such a spirit of good order and obedience to continental government, as is sufficient to make every reasonable person easy and happy on that head. No man can assign the least pretence for his fears, on any other grounds, than such as are truly childish and ridiculous, viz., that one  
 25 colony will be striving for superiority over another.

Where there are no distinctions there can be no superiority; perfect equality affords no temptation. The Republics of Europe are all (and we may say always) in peace. Holland and Switzerland are without wars, foreign or domestic; Monarchical governments, it is true, are never long at rest: the crown  
 30 itself is a temptation to enterprising ruffians at *home*; and that degree of pride and insolence ever attendant on regal authority, swells into a rupture with foreign powers in instances where a republican government, by being formed on more natural principles, would negotiate the mistake.

If there is any true cause of fear respecting independance, it is because no  
 35 plan is yet laid down. Men do not see their way out.—Wherefore, as an opening into that business I offer the following hints; at the same time modestly affirming, that I have no other opinion of them myself, than that they may be the means of giving rise to something better. Could the straggling thoughts of individuals be collected, they would frequently form materials for wise and  
 40 able men to improve into useful matter.

LET the assemblies be annual, with a president only. The representation more equal, their business wholly domestic, and subject to the authority of a Continental Congress.

Let each Colony be divided into six, eight, or ten, convenient districts, each  
 45 district to send a proper number of Delegates to Congress, so that each Colony send at least thirty. The whole number in Congress will be at least 390. Each Congress to sit and to choose a President by the following method. When

the Delegates are met, let a colony be taken from the whole thirteen Colonies by lot, after which let the Congress choose (by ballot) a president from out of the Delegates of that province. In the next Congress, let a Colony be taken by lot from twelve only, omitting that Colony from which the president was taken in the former Congress, and so proceeding on till the whole thirteen shall have had their proper rotation. And in order that nothing may pass into a law but what is satisfactorily just, not less than three fifths of the Congress to be called a majority.—He that will promote discord, under a government so equally formed as this, would have joined Lucifer in his revolt. 5

But as there is a peculiar delicacy from whom, or in what manner, this business must first arise, and as it seems most agreeable and consistent that it should come from some intermediate body between the governed and the governors, that is, between the Congress and the People, Let a CONTINENTAL CONFERENCE be held in the following manner, and for the following purpose, 10

A Committee of twenty six members of Congress, *viz.* Two for each colony. Two members from each house of Assembly, or Provincial convention; and five Representatives of the people at large, to be chosen in the capital city or town of each Province, for, and in behalf of the whole Province, by as many qualified voters as shall think proper to attend from all parts of the Province for that purpose; or, if more convenient, the Representatives may be chosen in two or three of the most populous parts thereof. In this CONFERENCE, thus assembled, will be united the two grand principles of business, *knowledge* and *power*. The members of Congress, Assemblies, or Conventions, by having had experience in national concerns, will be able and useful counsellors, and the whole, being impowered by the people, will have a truly legal authority. 15 20 25

The conferring members being met, let their business be to frame a CONTINENTAL CHARTER, or Charter of the United Colonies; (answering to what is called the Magna Charta of England) fixing the number and manner of choosing members of Congress, Members of Assembly, with their date of sitting; and drawing the line of business and jurisdiction between them. Always remembering, that our strength is continental, not ~~provincial~~ <sup>narrow limited</sup>. Securing freedom and property to all men, and above all things, the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; with such other matter as it is necessary for a charter to contain. Immediately after which, the said conference to dissolve, and the bodies which shall be chosen conformable to the said charter, to be the legislators and governors of this continent for the time being: Whose peace and happiness, may God preserve. AMEN. 30 35

Should any body of men be hereafter delegated for this or some similar purpose, I offer them the following extracts from that wise observer on governments, DRAGONETTI. "The science," says he, "of the politician consists in fixing the true point of happiness and freedom. Those men would deserve the gratitude of ages, who should discover a mode of government that contained the greatest sum of individual happiness, with the least national expense." 40

g. Lucifer—*Cf.* Isa. 14: 12 ff. 40. Dragonetti—Giacinto, Marquis dei Dragonetti (1738-1818), author of *Le virtù ed i premi* (1767), which Paine probably read in a French translation of 1768, or an English one of 1769. 43. expense—"Dragonetti on 'Virtues and Reward.'" (Paine's note)

But where, say some, is the king of America? I'll tell you, Friend, he reigns above, and doth not make havoc of mankind like the Royal Brute of Great Britain. Yet that we may not appear to be defective even in earthly honors, let a day be solemnly set apart for proclaiming the Charter; let it be brought forth  
 5 placed on the divine law, the Word of God; let a Crown be placed thereon, by which the world may know, that so far as we approve of monarchy, that in America THE LAW IS KING. For as in absolute governments the king is law, so in free countries the law OUGHT to BE king; and there ought to be no other. But lest any ill use should afterwards arise, let the Crown at the conclusion of the  
 10 ceremony be demolished, and scattered among the People whose right it is.

A government of our own is our natural right: and when a man seriously reflects on the precariousness of human affairs, he will become convinced, that it is infinitely wiser and safer, to form a Constitution of our own in a cool deliberate manner, while we have it in our power, than to trust such an interesting event to time and chance. If we omit it now, some Massanello may here-  
 15 after arise, who, laying hold of popular disquietudes, may collect together the desperate and the discontented, and by assuming to themselves the powers of government, finally sweep away the liberties of the Continent like a deluge.  
 Should the government of America return again into the hands of Britain, the  
 20 tottering situation of things will be a temptation for some desperate adventurer to try his fortune; and in such a case, what relief can Britain give? Ere she could hear the news, the fatal business might be done; and ourselves suffering like the wretched Britons under the oppression of the conqueror. Ye that oppose independance now, ye know not what ye do; ye are opening a door to  
 25 eternal tyranny, by keeping vacant the seat of government. There are thousands and tens of thousands, who would think it glorious to expel from the Continent, that barbarous and hellish power, which hath stirred up the Indians and the Negroes to destroy us; the cruelty hath a double guilt, it is dealing brutally by us, and treacherously by them.

To talk of friendship with those in whom our reason forbids us to have faith, and our affections wounded thro' a thousand pores instruct us to detest, is madness and folly. Every day wears out the little remains of kindred between us and them; and can there be any reason to hope, that as the relationship expires, the affection will increase, or that we shall agree better when we have ten  
 30 times more and greater concerns to quarrel over than ever?

Ye that tell us of harmony and reconciliation, can ye restore to us the time that is past? Can ye give to prostitution its former innocence? neither can ye reconcile Britain and America. The last cord now is broken, the people of England are presenting addresses against us. There are injuries which nature cannot forgive; she would cease to be nature if she did. As well can the lover forgive the ravisher of his mistress, as the Continent forgive the murders of  
 40 Britain. The Almighty hath implanted in us these inextinguishable feelings for good and wise purposes. They are the guardians of his image in our hearts.

15. Massanello—"Thomas Anello, otherwise Massanello, a fisherman of Naples, who after spiriting up his countrymen in the public market place, against the oppression of the Spaniards, to whom the place was then subject, prompted them to revolt, and in the space of a day became king." (Paine's note)

They distinguish us from the herd of common animals. The social compact would dissolve, and justice be extirpated from the earth, or have only a casual existence were we callous to the touches of affection. The robber and the murderer would often escape unpunished, did not the injuries which our tempers sustain, provoke us into justice.

O! ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose not only the tyranny but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the old world is over-run with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia and Africa have long expelled her. Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart. O receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind.

### THE AMERICAN CRISIS

Paine published sixteen numbers of *The American Crisis* from 1776 to the close of 1783, all designed to keep up the spirit of the Americans and to help them achieve independence. The first appeared in the *Pennsylvania Journal*, December 19, 1776, and was immediately issued as a pamphlet. Following Professor Peach, the editors here reprint the edition of December 23, 1776.

For the background of this paper, it is necessary to understand that Paine participated in the American retreat across New Jersey in the autumn of 1776, and crossed the Delaware into Pennsylvania with the army. General Greene had been compelled to evacuate Fort Lee and Fort Washington on the Hudson, and to retreat with the main army; and the story is that during this retreat, while in camp at Newark, New Jersey, Paine wrote the first *Crisis* paper on a drumhead. By Washington's order, the paper was read at the head of each regiment after publication. On Christmas night, Washington made a surprise attack on Trenton, New Jersey, and took a thousand prisoners. Paine participated in this battle, and also in the Battle of Princeton in January, 1777.

THESE are the times that try men's souls: The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it Now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem to[o] lightly:—'Tis dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed, if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated. Britain, with an army to enforce her tyranny, has declared that she has a right (not only to) TAX but "to BIND us in ALL CASES WHATSOEVER", and if being bound in that manner, is not slavery, then is there not such a thing as slavery upon earth. Even the expression is impious for so unlimited a power can belong only to God.

Whether the Independence of the Continent was declared too soon, or delayed too long, I will not now enter into as an argument; my own simple opinion is, that had it been eight months earlier, it would have been much better. We did not make a proper use of last winter, neither could we, while we were in a dependent state. However, the fault, if it were one, was all our

own; we have none to blame but ourselves. But no great deal is lost yet; all that Howe has been doing for this month past, is rather a ravage than a conquest, which the spirit of the Jerseys a year ago would have quickly repulsed, and which time and a little resolution will soon recover.

5 I have as little superstition in me as any man living, but my secret opinion has ever been, and still is, that God Almighty will not give up a people to military destruction, or leave them unsupportedly to perish, who have so earnestly and so repeatedly sought to avoid the calamities of war, by every decent method which wisdom could invent. Neither have I so much of the  
10 infidel in me, as to suppose that he has relinquished the government of the world, and given us up to the care of devils; and as I do not, I cannot see on what grounds the king of Britain can look up to heaven for help against us: a common murderer, a highwayman, or a house-breaker, has as good a pretence as he.

15 'Tis surprising to see how rapidly a panic will sometimes run through a country. All nations and ages have been subject to them: Britain has trembled like an ague at the report of a French fleet of flat-bottomed boats; and in the fourteenth century the whole English army, after ravaging the kingdom of France, was driven back like men petrified with fear; and this brave exploit  
20 was performed by a few broken forces collected and headed by a woman, Joan of Arc. Would that heaven might inspire some Jersey maid to spirit up her countrymen, and save her fair fellow sufferers from ravage and ravishment! Yet panics, in some cases, have their uses; they produce as much good as hurt. Their duration is always short; the mind soon grows through them,  
25 and acquires a firmer habit than before. But their peculiar advantage is, that they are the touchstones of sincerity and hypocrisy, and bring things and men to light, which might otherwise have lain forever undiscovered. In fact, they have the same effect on secret traitors which an imaginary apparition would have upon a private murderer. They sift out the hidden thoughts of man, and  
30 hold them up in public to the world. Many a disguised tory has lately shown his head, that shall penitentially solemnize with curses the day on which Howe arrived upon the Delaware.

As I was with the troops at Fort-Lee, and marched with them to the edge of Pennsylvania, I am well acquainted with many circumstances, which those who  
35 live at a distance, know but little or nothing of. Our situation there was exceedingly cramped, the place being a narrow neck of land between the North-River and the Hackensack. Our force was inconsiderable, being not one-fourth so great as Howe could bring against us. We had no army at hand to have relieved the garrison, had we shut ourselves up and stood on our defence. Our  
40 ammunition, light artillery, and the best part of our stores, had been removed,

2. **Howe**—The British general, Lord William Howe (1729-1814), failed to follow up his victory effectively. The motives for his failure have been variously interpreted. 33. **Fort-Lee**—Paine intentionally minimizes the loss of Forts Lee and Washington. Twenty-six hundred men were captured with Fort Washington, and a large quantity of military supplies with Fort Lee, though the garrison escaped. General Lee, stationed at Newcastle with about 7,000 men, had selfishly refused to come to the rescue of the forts. Far from being "field forts," the two posts were intended to prevent British navigation of the Hudson River. Nor was the army strengthened by the militia, as Paine intimates; on the contrary, Washington had less than 3,000 men when the paper was written.

on the apprehension that Howe would endeavor to penetrate the Jerseys, in which case Fort Lee could be of no use to us; for it must occur to every thinking man, whether in the army or not, that these kind of field forts are only for temporary purposes, and last in use no longer than the enemy directs his force against the particular object, which such forts are raised to defend. Such was our situation and condition at Fort-Lee on the morning of the 20th of November, when an officer arrived with information that the enemy with 200 boats had landed about seven miles above: Major General Green, who commanded the garrison, immediately ordered them under arms, and sent express to General Washington at the town of Hackensack, distant by the way of the ferry, six miles. Our first object was to secure the bridge over the Hackensack, which laid up the river between the enemy and us, about six miles from us, and three from them. General Washington arrived in about three-quarters of an hour, and marched at the head of the troops towards the bridge, which place I expected we should have a brush for; however, they did not choose to dispute it with us, and the greatest part of our troops went over the bridge, the rest over the ferry, except some which passed at a mill on a small creek, between the bridge and the ferry, and made their way through some marshy grounds up to the town of Hackensack, and there passed the river. We brought off as much baggage as the wagons could contain, the rest was lost. The simple object was to bring off the garrison, and march them on till they could be strengthened by the Jersey or Pennsylvania militia, so as to be enabled to make a stand. We staid four days at Newark, collected our out-posts with some of the Jersey militia, and marched out twice to meet the enemy, on being informed that they were advancing, though our numbers were greatly inferior to theirs. Howe, in my little opinion, committed a great error in generalship in not throwing a body of forces off from Staten-Island through Amboy, by which means he might have seized all our stores at Brunswick, and intercepted our march into Pennsylvania; but if we believe the power of hell to be limited, we must likewise believe that their agents are under some providential control.

I shall not now attempt to give all the particulars of our retreat to the Delaware; suffice it for the present to say, that both officers and men, though greatly harassed and fatigued, frequently without rest, covering, or provision, the inevitable consequences of a long retreat, bore it with a manly and martial spirit. All their wishes centered in one, which was, that the country would turn out and help them to drive the enemy back. *Voltaire* has remarked that King William never appeared to full advantage but in difficulties and in action; the same remark may be made on General Washington, for the character fits him. There is a natural firmness in some minds which cannot be unlocked by trifles, but which, when unlocked, discovers a cabinet of fortitude; and I reckon it among those kind of public blessings, which we do not immediately see, that God hath blessed him with uninterrupted health, and given him a mind that can even flourish upon care.

I shall conclude this paper with some miscellaneous remarks on the state of

**27. Staten-Island**—where the British first landed in their attack on New York. **27. Amboy**—Perth Amboy, New Jersey. A glance at the map will make clear Paine's criticism. **36. Voltaire**—the famous French *philosophe* (1694-1778), much read in eighteenth-century America, and sympathetic to Paine because of his deism. **36-37. King William**—William III (1650-1702), Prince of Orange, and King of England (1689-1702), the principal opponent of Louis XIV of France.

our affairs; and shall begin with asking the following question, Why is it that the enemy have left the New-England provinces, and made these middle ones the seat of war? The answer is easy: New England is not infested with tories, and we are. I have been tender in raising the cry against these men, and used  
 5 numberless arguments to show them their danger, but it will not do to sacrifice a world either to their folly or their baseness. The period is now arrived, in which either they or we must change our sentiments, or one or both must fall. And what is a tory? Good God! what is he? I should not be afraid to go with a hundred Whigs against a thousand tories, were they to attempt to get into  
 10 arms. Every tory is a coward; for servile, slavish, self-interested fear is the foundation of toryism; and a man under such influence, though he may be cruel, never can be brave.

But, before the line of irrecoverable separation be drawn between us, let us reason the matter together: Your conduct is an invitation to the enemy, yet not  
 15 one in a thousand of you has heart enough to join him. Howe is as much deceived by you as the American cause is injured by you. He expects you will all take up arms, and flock to his standard, with muskets on your shoulders. Your opinions are of no use to him, unless you support him personally, for 'tis soldiers, and not tories, that he wants.

20 I once felt all that kind of anger, which a man ought to feel, against the mean principles that are held by the tories: A noted one, who kept a tavern at Amboy, was standing at his door, with as pretty a child in his hand, about eight or nine years old, as I ever saw, and after speaking his mind as freely as he thought was prudent, finished with this unfatherly expression, "*Well! give me peace*  
 25 *in my day.*" Not a man lives on the continent but fully believes that a separation must some time or other finally take place, and a generous parent should have said, "*If there must be trouble, let it be in my day, that my child may have peace;*" and this single reflection, well applied, is sufficient to awaken every man to duty. Not a place upon earth might be so happy as America. Her situa-  
 30 tion is remote from all the wrangling world, and she has nothing to do but to trade with them. A man can distinguish himself between temper and principle, and I am as confident, as I am that God governs the world, that America will never be happy till she gets clear of foreign dominion. Wars, without ceasing, will break out till that period arrives, and the continent must in the end be  
 35 conqueror; for though the flame of liberty may sometimes cease to shine, the coal can never expire.

America did not, nor does not want force; but she wanted a proper application of that force. Wisdom is not the purchase of a day, and it is no wonder that we should err at the first setting off. From an excess of tenderness, we  
 40 were unwilling to raise an army, and trusted our cause to the temporary defence of a well-meaning militia. A summer's experience has now taught us better; yet with those troops, while they were collected, we were able to set bounds to the progress of the enemy, and, thank God! they are again assembling. I always considered militia as the best troops in the world for a sudden  
 45 exertion, but they will not do for a long campaign. Howe, it is probable, will make an attempt on this city; should he fail on this side the Delaware, he is ruined. If he succeeds, our cause is not ruined. He stakes all on his side against

a part on ours; admitting he succeeds, the consequence will be, that armies from both ends of the continent will march to assist their suffering friends in the middle states; for he cannot go everywhere, it is impossible. I consider Howe as the greatest enemy the tories have; he is bringing a war into their country, which, had it not been for him and partly for themselves, they had been clear of. Should he now be expelled, I wish with all the devotion of a Christian, that the names of whig and tory may never more be mentioned; but should the tories give him encouragement to come, or assistance if he come, I as sincerely wish that our next year's arms may expel them from the continent, and the Congress appropriate their possessions to the relief of those who have suffered in well-doing. A single successful battle next year will settle the whole. America could carry on a two years' war by the confiscation of the property of disaffected persons, and be made happy by their expulsion. Say not that this is revenge, call it rather the soft resentment of a suffering people, who, having no object in view but the good of ALL, have staked their OWN ALL upon a seemingly doubtful event. Yet it is folly to argue against determined hardness; eloquence may strike the ear, and the language of sorrow draw forth the tear of compassion, but nothing can reach the heart that is steeled with prejudice.

Quitting this class of men, I turn with the warm ardor of a friend to those who have nobly stood, and are yet determined to stand the matter out: I call not upon a few, but upon all: not on THIS state or THAT state, but on EVERY state: up and help us; lay your shoulders to the wheel; better have too much force than too little, when so great an object is at stake. Let it be told to the future world, that in the depth of winter, when nothing but hope and virtue could survive, that the city and the country, alarmed at one common danger, came forth to meet and to repulse it. Say not that thousands are gone, turn out your tens of thousands; throw not the burden of the day upon Providence, but "*show your faith by your works,*" that God may bless you. It matters not where you live, or what rank of life you hold, the evil or the blessing will reach you all. The far and the near, the home counties and the back, the rich and the poor, will suffer or rejoice alike. The heart that feels not now is dead; the blood of his children will curse his cowardice, who shrinks back at a time when a little might have saved the whole, and made *them* happy. I love the man that can smile in trouble, that can gather strength from distress, and grow brave by reflection. 'Tis the business of little minds to shrink; but he whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct, will pursue his principles unto death. My own line of reasoning is to myself as straight and clear as a ray of light. Not all the treasures of the world, so far as I believe, could have induced me to support an offensive war, for I think it murder; but if a thief breaks into my house, burns and destroys my property, and kills or threatens to kill me, or those that are in it, and to "*bind me in all cases whatsoever*" to his absolute will, am I to suffer it? What signifies it to me, whether he who does it is a king or a common man; my countryman or not my countryman; whether it be done by an individual villain, or an army of them? If we reason to the

27-28. thousands . . . tens of thousands—Cf. I Sam. 18:7. 31. home counties—eastern counties. 31. the back—western counties.



root of things we shall find no difference; neither can any just cause be assigned why we should punish in the one case and pardon in the other. Let them call me rebel, and welcome, I feel no concern from it; but I should suffer the misery of devils, were I to make a whore of my soul by swearing allegiance to  
 5 one whose character is that of a sottish, stupid, stubborn, worthless, brutish man. I conceive likewise a horrid idea in receiving mercy from a being, who at the last day shall be shrieking to the rocks and mountains to cover him, and fleeing with terror from the orphan, the widow, and the slain of America.

There are cases which cannot be overdone by language, and this is one.  
 10 There are persons, too, who see not the full extent of the evil which threatens them; they solace themselves with hopes that the enemy, if he succeed, will be merciful. It is the madness of folly, to expect mercy from those who have refused to do justice; and even mercy, where conquest is the object, is only a trick of war; The cunning of the fox is as murderous as the violence of the  
 15 wolf, and we ought to guard equally against both. Howe's first object is, partly by threats and partly by promises, to terrify or seduce the people to deliver up their arms and receive mercy. The ministry recommended the same plan to Gage, and this is what the tories call making their peace, "*a peace which passeth all understanding*" indeed! A peace which would be the immediate forerunner of a worse ruin than any we have yet thought of. Ye men  
 20 of Pennsylvania, do reason upon these things! Were the back counties to give up their arms, they would fall an easy prey to the Indians, who are all armed: this perhaps is what some tories would not be sorry for. Were the home counties to deliver up their arms, they would be exposed to the resentment of the  
 25 back counties, who would then have it in their power to chastise their defection at pleasure. And were any one state to give up its arms, THAT state must be garrisoned by all Howe's army of Britons and Hessians to preserve it from the anger of the rest. Mutual fear is the principal link in the chain of mutual love, and woe be to that state that breaks the compact. Howe is mercifully  
 30 inviting you to barbarous destruction, and men must be either rogues or fools that will not see it. I dwell not upon the vapors of imagination; I bring reason to your ears, and, in language as plain as A, B, C, hold up truth to your eyes.

I thank God that I fear not. I see no real cause for fear. I know our situation well, and can see the way out of it. While our army was collected, Howe dared  
 35 not risk a battle; and it is no credit to him that he decamped from the White Plains, and waited a mean opportunity to ravage the defenceless Jerseys; but it is great credit to us, that, with a handful of men, we sustained an orderly retreat for near an hundred miles, brought off our ammunition, all our field-pieces, the greatest part of our stores, and had four rivers to pass. None can  
 40 say that our retreat was precipitate, for we were near three weeks in performing it, that the country might have time to come in. Twice we marched back to meet the enemy, and remained out till dark. The sign of fear was not seen in

18. Gage—General Thomas Gage (1721-1787) was in command of the British troops in North America until the arrival of Lord Howe. 18-19. peace . . . understanding—*Cf.* Phil. 4: 7. 35-36. White Plains—Howe attacked Washington at White Plains, New York, Oct. 22, 1776; the Americans were driven back, but a rain intervened, and Howe did not follow up his advantage, so that the Americans withdrew without hindrance to Newcastle. Howe then ceased movement up the Hudson, and turned to New Jersey. 41. country—that the militia might have time to gather.

our camp, and had not some of the cowardly and disaffected inhabitants spread false alarms through the country, the Jerseys had never been ravaged. Once more we are again collected and collecting, our new army at both ends of the continent is recruiting fast, and we shall be able to open the next campaign with sixty thousand men, well armed and clothed. This is our situation, and who will may know it. By perseverance and fortitude we have the prospect of a glorious issue; by cowardice and submission, the sad choice of a variety of evils—a ravaged country—a depopulated city—habitations without safety, and slavery without hope—our homes turned into barracks and bawdy-houses for Hessians, and a future race to provide for, whose fathers we shall doubt of. Look on this picture and weep over it! and if there yet remains one thoughtless wretch who believes it not, let him suffer it unlamented.

COMMON SENSE.

December 23, 1776.

## THE AGE OF REASON

The circumstances of the publication of *The Age of Reason* are noted in the outline biography of Paine. The editors once again are following the text established by Peach. The full title of the work is *The Age of Reason: Being an Investigation of True and of Fabulous Theology*. The first section here quoted is the opening of Part I of the work; the second section here quoted occurs a little later in the same part; and the selections printed are designed to show the basis of Paine's deism in the argument from design. The greater portion of *The Age of Reason* is devoted to an exposé of the inconsistencies of Christian theology and of the Bible; it is probably this aspect of his work that made it popular on the Western frontier. The student will note that Paine's argument from design is supported by his acceptance of the mathematical-mechanical theory of the universe associated with Newton.

IT HAS been my intention, for several years past, to publish my thoughts upon Religion. I am well aware of the difficulties that attend the subject; and, from that consideration, had reserved it to a more advanced period of life. I intended it to be the last offering I should make to my fellow-citizens of all nations; and that at a time when the purity of the motive that induced me to it could not admit of a question, even by those who might disapprove the work.

The circumstance that has now taken place in France, of the total abolition of the whole national order of priesthood and of everything appertaining to compulsive systems of religion, and compulsive articles of faith, has not only precipitated my intention, but rendered a work of this kind exceedingly necessary; lest, in the general wreck of superstition, of false systems of government,

22-24. circumstance . . . faith—Paine dates Part I: "Paris, 8th. Pluviose, Second Year of the French Republic, one and indivisible. January 27, O.S. 1794." By that date the Constituent Assembly had disestablished the Roman Catholic Church in France, "nationalized" its property, and established a civil constitution for the clergy. In 1793-94 the Commune further "de-Christianized" France by setting up a new, non-Christian calendar, and establishing the Worship of Reason.

and false theology, we lose sight of morality, of humanity, and of the theology that is true.

As several of my colleagues, and others of my fellow-citizens of France, have given me the example of making their voluntary and individual profession of faith, I also will make mine; and I do this with all that sincerity and frankness with which the mind of man communicates with itself.

I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life.

I believe the equality of man, and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow-creatures happy.

But, lest it should be supposed that I believe many other things in addition to these, I shall, in the progress of this work, declare the things I do not believe, and my reasons for not believing them.

I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish church, by the Roman church, by the Greek church, by the Turkish church, by the Protestant church, nor by any church that I know of. My own mind is my own church.

All national institutions of churches—whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish—appear to me no other than human inventions set up to terrify and enslave mankind and monopolize power and profit.

I do not mean by this declaration to condemn those who believe otherwise. They have the same right to their belief as I have to mine. But it is necessary to the happiness of man, that he be mentally faithful to himself. Infidelity does not consist in believing, or in disbelieving; it consists in professing to believe what he does not believe.

It is impossible to calculate the moral mischief, if I may so express it, that mental lying has produced in society. When a man has so far corrupted and prostituted the chastity of his mind, as to subscribe his professional belief to things he does not believe, he has prepared himself for the commission of every other crime. He takes up the trade of a priest for the sake of gain, and, in order to *qualify* himself for that trade, he begins with a perjury. Can we conceive anything more destructive to morality than this?

Soon after I had published the pamphlet, COMMON SENSE, in America, I saw the exceeding probability that a Revolution in the System of Government would be followed by a revolution in the system of religion. The adulterous connection of church and state, wherever it had taken place, whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish, had so effectually prohibited, by pains and penalties, every discussion upon established creeds, and upon first principles of religion, that until the system of government should be changed those subjects could not be brought fairly and openly before the world; but that whenever this should be done, a revolution in the system of religion would follow. Human inventions and priest-craft would be detected, and man would return to the pure, unmixed, and unadulterated belief of one God, and no more.

Every national church or religion has established itself by pretending some special mission from God, communicated to certain individuals. The Jews have their Moses; the Christians their Jesus Christ, their apostles and saints; and the Turks their Mahomet—as if the way to God was not open to every man alike.

Each of those churches show certain books which they call *revelation*, or the word of God. The Jews say that their word of God was given by God to Moses face to face; the Christians say that their word of God came by divine inspiration; and the Turks say that their word of God (the Koran) was brought by an angel from heaven. Each of those churches accuse the other of unbelief; 5 and, for my own part, I disbelieve them all.

As it is necessary to affix right ideas to words, I will, before I proceed further into the subject, offer some observations on the word *revelation*. Revelation, when applied to religion, means something communicated *immediately* from God to man. 10

No one will deny or dispute the power of the Almighty to make such a communication, if he pleases. But admitting, for the sake of a case, that something has been revealed to a certain person, and not revealed to any other person, it is revelation to that person only. When he tells it to a second person, a second to a third, a third to a fourth, and so on, it ceases to be a revelation 15 to all those persons. It is a revelation to the first person only, and *hearsay* to every other; and, consequently, they are not obliged to believe it. It is a contradiction in terms and ideas to call anything a revelation that comes to us at secondhand, either verbally or in writing. Revelation is necessarily limited to the first communication. After this, it is only an account of something which 20 that person says was a revelation made to him; and though he may find himself obliged to believe it, it cannot be incumbent upon me to believe it in the same manner, for it was not a revelation to *me*, and I have only his word for it that it was made to *him*.

When Moses told the children of Israel that he received the two tables of 25 the commandments from the hand of God, they were not obliged to believe him, because they had no other authority for it than his telling them so; and I have no other authority for it than some historian telling me so. The commandments carry no internal evidence of divinity with them. They contain some good moral precepts, such as any man qualified to be a lawgiver, or a 30 legislator, could produce himself, without having recourse to supernatural intervention.

When I am told that the Koran was written in heaven, and brought to Mahomet by an angel, the account comes to near the same kind of hearsay evidence and second-hand authority as the former. I did not see the angel my- 35 self, and therefore I have a right not to believe it.

When also I am told that a woman, called the Virgin Mary said, or gave out, that she was with child without any cohabitation with a man, and that her betrothed husband, Joseph, said, that an angel told him so, I have a right to believe them or not; such a circumstance required a much stronger evidence 40 than their bare word for it; but we have not even this; for neither Joseph nor Mary wrote any such matter themselves. It is only reported by others that *they said so*. It is hearsay upon hearsay, and I do not chuse to rest my belief upon such evidence.

25. **Moses**—*Cf.* Ex. 19-20. 31. **intervention**—"It is, however, necessary to except the declaration which says that God visits the sins of the fathers upon the children. This is contrary to every principle of moral justice." (Paine's note) 37. **Virgin Mary**—*Cf.* Matt. 1: 18-25.

It is, however, not difficult to account for the credit that was given to the story of Jesus Christ being the Son of God. He was born at a time when the heathen mythology had still some fashion and repute in the world, and that mythology had prepared the people for the belief of such a story. Almost all the extraordinary men that lived under the heathen mythology were reputed to be the sons of some of their gods. It was not a new thing, at that time, to believe a man to have been celestially begotten; the intercourse of gods with women was then a matter of familiar opinion. Their Jupiter, according to their accounts, had cohabited with hundreds; the story therefore had nothing in it either new, wonderful, or obscene; it was conformable to the opinions that then prevailed among the people called Gentiles, or mythologists, and it was those people only that believed it. The Jews, who had kept strictly to the belief of one God and no more, and who had always rejected the heathen mythology, never credited the story.

It is curious to observe how the theory of what is called the Christian church sprung out of the tail of the heathen mythology. A direct incorporation took place, in the first instance, by making the reputed founder to be celestially begotten. The trinity of gods that then followed was no other than a reduction of the former plurality, which was about twenty or thirty thousand. The statue of Mary succeeded the statue of Diana of Ephesus. The deification of heroes changed into the canonization of saints. The mythologists had gods for everything; the Christian mythologists had saints for everything. The church became as crowded with the one as the pantheon had been with the other; and Rome was the place of both. The Christian theory is little else than the idolatry of the ancient mythologists, accommodated to the purposes of power and revenue; and it yet remains to reason and philosophy to abolish the amphibious fraud.

Nothing that is here said can apply, even with the most distant disrespect, to the real character of Jesus Christ. He was a virtuous and an amiable man. The morality that he preached and practiced was of the most benevolent kind; and though similar systems of morality had been preached by Confucius, and by some of the Greek philosophers, many years before; by the Quakers since, and by many good men in all ages, it has not been exceeded by any. . . .

But some perhaps will say: Are we to have no word of God—no revelation? I answer: Yes; there is a word of God; there is a revelation.

THE WORD OF GOD IS THE CREATION WE BEHOLD; and it is in *this word*, which no human invention can counterfeit or alter, that God speaketh universally to man.

Human language is local and changeable, and is therefore incapable of being used as the means of unchangeable and universal information. The idea that God sent Jesus Christ to publish, as they say, the glad tidings to all nations, from one end of the earth unto the other, is consistent only with the ignorance of those who knew nothing of the extent of the world, and who believed, as those world-saviors believed and continue to believe for several centuries (and

... 20. Diana of Ephesus—Cf. Acts 19: 24 ff.

that in contradiction to the discoveries of philosophers and the experience of navigators), that the earth was flat like a trencher; and that a man might walk to the end of it.

But how was Jesus Christ to make anything known to all nations? He could speak but one language, which was Hebrew; and there are in the world several hundred languages. Scarcely any two nations speak the same language, or understand each other; and as to translations, every man who knows anything of languages knows that it is impossible to translate from one language into another, not only without losing a great part of the original, but frequently of mistaking the sense; and, besides all this, the art of printing was wholly unknown at the time Christ lived.

It is always necessary that the means that are to accomplish any end be equal to the accomplishment of that end, or the end cannot be accomplished. It is in this that the difference between finite and infinite power and wisdom discovers itself. Man frequently fails in accomplishing his ends from a natural inability of the power to the purpose; and frequently from the want of wisdom to apply power properly. But it is impossible for infinite power and wisdom to fail as man faileth. The means it useth are always equal to the end; but human language, more especially as there is not a universal language, is incapable of being used as a universal means of unchangeable and uniform information; and therefore it is not the means that God useth in manifesting himself universally to man.

It is only in the CREATION that all our ideas and conceptions of a *word of God* can unite. The creation speaketh a universal language, independently of human speech or human language, multiplied and various as they be. It is an ever existing original which every man can read. It cannot be forged; it cannot be counterfeited; it cannot be lost; it cannot be altered; it cannot be suppressed. It does not depend upon the will of man whether it shall be published or not; it publishes itself from one end of the earth to the other. It preaches to all nations and to all worlds; and this *word of God* reveals to man all that is necessary for man to know of God.

Do we want to contemplate his power? We see it in the immensity of the creation. Do we want to contemplate his wisdom? We see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible Whole is governed. Do we want to contemplate his munificence? We see it in the abundance with which he fills the earth. Do we want to contemplate his mercy? We see it in his not withholding that abundance even from the unthankful. In fine, do we want to know what God is? Search not the book called the scripture, which any human hand might make, but the scripture called the Creation.

The only idea man can affix to the name of God is that of a *first cause*, the cause of all things. And, incomprehensibly difficult as it is for man to conceive what a first cause is, he arrives at the belief of it from the tenfold greater difficulty of disbelieving it. It is difficult beyond description to conceive that space can have no end; but it is more difficult to conceive an end. It is difficult beyond the power of man to conceive an eternal duration of what we call time; but it is more impossible to conceive a time when there shall be no time. In like manner of reasoning, everything we behold carries in itself the internal evidence

that it did not make itself. Every man is an evidence to himself that he did not make himself; neither could his father make himself, nor his grandfather, nor any of his race; neither could any tree, plant, or animal make itself; and it is the conviction arising from this evidence that carries us on, as it were, by necessity, to the belief of a first cause eternally existing, of a nature totally different to any material existence we know of, and by the power of which all things exist; and this first cause, man calls God.

It is only by the exercise of reason that man can discover God. Take away that reason and he would be incapable of understanding anything; and, in this case, it would be just as consistent to read even the book called the Bible to a horse as to a man. How then is it that those people pretend to reject reason?

Almost the only parts of the book called the Bible that convey to us any idea of God are some chapters in Job, and the 19th Psalm; I recollect no other. Those parts are true *deistical* compositions; for they treat of the *Deity* through his works. They take the book of Creation as the word of God; they refer to no other book; and all the inferences they make are drawn from that volume.

I insert, in this place, the 19th Psalm, as paraphrased into English verse by Addison. I recollect not the prose, and where I write this I have not the opportunity of seeing it.

20                   The spacious firmament on high,  
                       With all the blue ethereal sky,  
                       And spangled heavens, a shining frame,  
                       Their great original proclaim.

25                   The unwearied sun, from day to day,  
                       Does his Creator's power display,  
                       And publishes to every land  
                       The work of an Almighty hand.

30                   Soon as the evening shades prevail  
                       The moon takes up the wondrous tale,  
                       And nightly to the listening earth  
                       Repeats the story of her birth;

35                   Whilst all the stars that round her burn  
                       And all the planets, in their turn,  
                       Confirm the tidings as they roll  
                       And spread the truth from pole to pole.

40                   What though in solemn silence all  
                       Move round this dark terrestrial ball;  
                       What though no real voice, nor sound,  
                       Amidst their radiant orbs be found.

                      In reason's ear they all rejoice,  
                       And utter forth a glorious voice;  
                       Forever singing as they shine,  
                       THE HAND THAT MADE US IS DIVINE.

13. chapters in Job—Presumably Chaps. 38-41. 18. Addison—Joseph Addison (1672-1719). 18. where I write this—i.e., in the Luxembourg prison. 20. The spacious—There are some unimportant variations in spacing and punctuation between this version of Addison's poem, sometimes called the "Divine Ode," and a standard text.

What more does man want to know than that the hand or power that made these things is divine, is omnipotent? Let him believe this with the force it is impossible to repel, if he permits his reason to act, and his rule of moral life will follow of course.

The allusions in Job have, all of them, the same tendency with this Psalm; that of deducing or proving a truth, that would otherwise be unknown, from truths already known. 5

I recollect not enough of the passages in Job to insert them correctly; but there is one that occurs to me that is applicable to the subject I am speaking upon: "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?" 10

I know not how the printers have pointed this passage, for I keep no Bible; but it contains two distinct questions that admit of distinct answers.

First, Canst thou by *searching* find out God? Yes, Because, in the first place, I know I did not make myself, and yet I have existence; and by *searching* into the nature of other things, I find that no other thing could make itself; and yet millions of other things exist; therefore it is that I know, by positive conclusion resulting from this search, that there is a power superior to all those things, and that power is God. 15

Secondly, Canst thou find out the Almighty to *perfection*? No, Not only because the power and wisdom he has manifested in the structure of the Creation that I behold is to me incomprehensible; but because even this manifestation, great as it is, is probably but a small display of that immensity of power and wisdom by which millions of other worlds, to me invisible by their distance, were created and continue to exist. 20

It is evident that both these questions were put to the reason of the person to whom they are supposed to have been addressed; and it is only by admitting the first question to be answered affirmatively that the second could follow. It would have been unnecessary, and even absurd, to have put a second question more difficult than the first, if the first question had been answered negatively. The two questions have different objects; the first refers to the existence of God, the second to his attributes. Reason can discover the one, but it falls infinitely short in discovering the whole of the other. 25

I recollect not a single passage in all the writings ascribed to the men called apostles that conveys any idea of what God is. Those writings are chiefly controversial; and the gloominess of the subject they dwell upon, that of man dying in agony on a cross, is better suited to the gloomy genius of a monk in a cell, by whom it is not impossible they were written, than to any man breathing the open air of the Creation. The only passage that occurs to me, that has any reference to the works of God, by which only his power and wisdom can be known, is related to have been spoken by Jesus Christ as a remedy against distrustful care. "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin." This, however, is far inferior to the allusions in Job and in the nineteenth Psalm; but it is similar in idea, and the modesty of the imagery is correspondent to the modesty of the man. 30 35 40 45

10. Canst—*Cf.* Job 11: 7. 12. pointed—punctuated. Paine, however, remembered the standard King James version. 42-43. Consider . . . spin—*Cf.* Matt. 6: 28.



As to the christian system of faith, it appears to me as a species of atheism; a sort of religious denial of God. It professes to believe in a man rather than in God. It is a compound made up chiefly of manism, with but little deism, and is as near to atheism as twilight is to darkness. It introduces between man  
 5 and his Maker an opaque body, which it calls a Redeemer as the moon introduces her opaque self between the earth and the sun; and it produces by this means a religious or an irreligious eclipse of light. It has put the whole orb of reason into shade.

The effect of this obscurity has been that of turning everything upside down, and representing it in reverse; and, among the revolutions it has thus magically  
 10 produced, it has made a revolution in theology.

That which is now called natural philosophy, embracing the whole circle of science, of which astronomy occupies the chief place, is the study of the works of God, and of the power and wisdom of God and his works, and is the  
 15 true theology.

As to the theology that is now studied in its place, it is the study of human opinions and of human fancies *concerning* God. It is not the study of God himself in the works that he has made, but in the works or writings that man has made; and it is not among the least of the mischiefs that the Christian  
 20 system has done to the world, that it has abandoned the original and beautiful system of theology, like a beautiful innocent, to distress and reproach, to make room for the hag of superstition.

The book of Job and the 19th Psalm, which even the church admits to be more ancient than the chronological order in which they stand in the book  
 25 called the Bible, are theological orations conformable to the original system of theology. The internal evidence of those orations proves to a demonstration that the study and contemplation of the works of creation, and of the power and wisdom of God, revealed and manifested in those works, make a great part of the religious devotion of the times in which they were written; and  
 30 it was this devotional study and contemplation that led to the discovery of the principles upon which what are now called sciences are established; and it is to the discovery of these principles that almost all the arts that contribute to the convenience of human life owe their existence. Every principal art has some science for its parent, though the person who mechanically performs  
 35 the work does not always, and but very seldom, perceive the connection.

It is a fraud of the Christian system to call the sciences *human inventions*; it is only the application of them that is human. Every science has for its basis a system of principles as fixed and unalterable as those by which the universe is regulated and governed. Man cannot make principles; he can only discover  
 40 them.

For example. Every person who looks at an almanack sees an account when an eclipse will take place, and he sees also that it never fails to take place, according to the account there given. This shows that man is acquainted with the laws by which the heavenly bodies move. But it would be something worse  
 45 than ignorance were any church on earth to say that those laws are a human invention.

It would also be ignorance, or something worse, to say, that the scientific

principles, by the aid of which man is enabled to calculate and foreknow when an eclipse will take place, are human invention. Man cannot invent anything that is eternal and immutable, and the scientific principles he employs for this purpose must be, and are, of necessity, as eternal and immutable as the laws by which the heavenly bodies move, or they could not be used as they are to ascertain the time when, and the manner how, an eclipse will take place. 5

The scientific principles that man employs to obtain the foreknowledge of an eclipse, or of anything else relating to the motion of the heavenly bodies, are contained chiefly in that part of science that is called trigonometry, or the property of a triangle, which, when applied to the study of the heavenly bodies, is called astronomy; when applied to direct the course of a ship on the ocean, it is called navigation; when applied to the construction of figures drawn by rule and compass, it is called geometry; when applied to the construction of plans of edifices, it is called architecture; when applied to the measurement of any portion of the surface of the earth, it is called land-surveying. In fine, it is the soul of science. It is an eternal truth; it contains the *mathematical demonstration* of which man speaks, and the extent of its uses is unknown. 10 15

It may be said that man can make or draw a triangle, and therefore a triangle is a human invention.

But the triangle, when drawn, is no other than the image of the principle: it is a delineation to the eye, and from thence to the mind, of a principle that would otherwise be imperceptible. The triangle does not make the principle, any more than a candle, taken into a room that was dark, makes the chairs and tables that before were invisible. All the properties of a triangle exist independently of the figure, and existed before any triangle was drawn or thought of by man. Man had no more to do in the formation of those properties, or principles, than he had to do in making the laws by which the heavenly bodies move; and therefore the one must have the same divine origin as the other. 20 25

In the same manner as it may be said that man can make a triangle so also may it be said he can make the mechanical instrument called a lever; but the principle by which the lever acts is a thing distinct from the instrument, and would exist if the instrument did not; it attaches itself to the instrument after it is made; the instrument, therefore, can act no otherwise than it does act; neither can all the efforts of human invention make it act otherwise. That which, in all such cases, man calls the *effect*, is no other than the principle itself rendered perceptible to the senses. 30 35

Since, then, man cannot make principles, from whence did he gain a knowledge of them, so as to be able to apply them, not only to things on earth, but to ascertain the motion of bodies so immensely distant from him as all the heavenly bodies are? From whence, I ask, *could* he gain that knowledge but from the study of the true theology? 40

It is the structure of the universe that has taught this knowledge to man. That structure is an ever-existing exhibition of every principle upon which every part of mathematical science is founded. The offspring of this science is mechanics; for mechanics is no other than the principles of science applied practically. The man who proportions the several parts of a mill uses the same 45

scientific principles as if he had the power of constructing a universe; but as he cannot give to matter that invisible agency by which all the component parts of the immense machine of the universe have influence upon each other, and act in motional unison together, without any apparent contact, and to which  
 5 man has given the name of attraction, gravitation, and repulsion, he supplies the place of that agency by the humble imitation of teeth and cogs. All the parts of Man's microcosm must visibly touch; but could he gain a knowledge of that agency, so as to be able to supply it in practice, we might then say that another *canonical* book of the word of God had been discovered.

- 10 If man could alter the properties of the lever, so also could he alter the properties of the triangle; for a lever (taking that sort of lever which is called a steelyard, for the sake of explanation) forms, when in motion, a triangle. The line it descends from (one point of that line being in the fulcrum), the line it descends to, and the chord of the arc which the end of the lever describes in the air, are the three sides of a triangle. The other arm of the lever  
 15 describes also a triangle; and the corresponding sides of those two triangles, calculated scientifically or measured geometrically; and also the sines, tangents, and secants generated from the angles and geometrically measured, have the same proportions to each other as the different weights have that will balance  
 20 each other on the lever, leaving the weight of the lever out of the case.

It may also be said that man can make a wheel and axis; that he can put wheels of different magnitudes together, and produce a mill. Still the case comes back to the same point, which is that he did not make the principle that gives the wheels those powers. That principle is as unalterable as in the former  
 25 cases, or rather it is the same principle under a different appearance to the eye.

The power that two wheels of different magnitudes have upon each other is in the same proportion as if the semi-diameters of the two wheels were joined together and made into that kind of lever I have described, suspended  
 30 at the part where the semi-diameters join; for the two wheels, scientifically considered, are no other than the two circles generated by the motion of the compound lever.

It is from the study of the true theology that all our knowledge of science is derived, and it is from that knowledge that all the arts have originated.

- 35 The Almighty lecturer, by displaying the principles of science in the structure of the universe, has invited man to study and to imitation. It is as if he had said to the inhabitants of this globe that we call ours: "I rendered the starry heavens visible, to teach him science and the arts. He can now provide for his own comfort, AND LEARN FROM MY MUNIFICENCE, TO BE KIND TO EACH  
 40 OTHER."

Of what use is it, unless it be to teach man something, that his eye is endowed with the power of beholding to an incomprehensible distance an immensity of worlds revolving in the ocean of space? Of what use is it that this immensity of worlds is visible to man? What has man to do with the Pleiades,  
 45 with Orion, with Sirius, with the star he calls the North star, with the moving orbs he has named Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, and Mercury, if no uses are to follow from their being visible? A less power of vision would have been

sufficient for man, if the immensity he now possesses were only given to waste itself, as it were, on an immense desert space glittering with shows.

It is only by contemplating what he calls the starry heavens as the book and school of science that he discovers any use in their being visible to him, or any advantage resulting from his immensity of vision. But when he contemplates 5 the subject in this light, he sees an additional motive for saying that *nothing was made in vain*; for in vain would be this power of vision if it taught man nothing.

# THOMAS JEFFERSON

1743 - 1826

## I. THE REVOLUTIONARY (1743-1782)

- 1743 Born at "Shadwell," Albemarle County, Virginia, April 13, 1743, the third child and eldest son of Peter and Jane (Randolph) Jefferson.
- 1752 Began the study of Latin, Greek, and French, the foundations of his cosmopolitan outlook and scholarly interests.
- 1757 The death of Jefferson's father left Thomas 2,750 acres of land.
- 1760-1762 At William and Mary College, where he was profoundly influenced by Dr. William Small, professor of mathematics and teacher of philosophy.
- 1762 Studied law under George Wythe, another great personality. Jefferson was admitted to the bar in 1767 and practiced for a few years.
- 1769 Elected to the House of Burgesses, the beginning of his political career as a revolutionary statesman.
- 1772 Married Martha Wayles Skelton and moved to "Monticello," still unfinished.
- 1774 Wrote *A Summary View of the Rights of British America*.
- 1775 Elected a Virginia representative to the Second Continental Congress.
- 1776 The Congress adopted The Declaration of Independence, Jefferson being the principal author.
- 1776-1779 Active in the Virginia legislature, especially in securing a commission to codify and modernize the laws of the commonwealth. Jefferson's Statute of Religious Freedom was not, however, adopted until 1786.
- 1779-1781 Governor of Virginia, retiring in disgust from public life because of public hostility.
- 1782 Death of Mrs. Jefferson. The care of three daughters was one of Jefferson's responsibilities.

## II. DIPLOMAT AND STATESMAN (1783-1796)

- 1783-1784 Delegate to the Congress of the Confederation, where he worked to strengthen the Union.
- 1784 Sent to Paris as American plenipotentiary to assist Franklin and John Adams in negotiating treaties of commerce with foreign nations.
- 1784-1785 Printed (in Paris) his *Notes on the State of Virginia*.
- 1785-1789 Served as Franklin's successor as American minister to France, traveling extensively and associating with the moderate leaders of the French Revolution.
- 1790-1793 Secretary of State under Washington. During this period his differences with Hamilton on constitutional theory led to the establishment of the two-party system.

## III. THE PRESIDENCY (1796-1809)

- 1796 Opposed John Adams in a closely contested presidential election in which Adams was victorious, Jefferson becoming Vice-President.
- 1798 Drafted the "Kentucky Resolution."
- 1800 Elected President of the United States as representing the "Republican" (that is, Democratic) party. Served two terms.
- 1803 Primarily responsible for the Louisiana Purchase and later for the expedition of Lewis and Clark.
- 1806 His leadership was responsible for the disastrous Embargo Act designed to prevent British and French depredations against American commerce.

## IV. THE SAGE OF MONTICELLO (1809-1826)

- 1809 Retired to "Monticello," where he spent the remaining years of his life.
- 1812 The sale of his library of 10,000 volumes to the National Government was the foundation of the Library of Congress, and temporarily lifted Jefferson's financial burdens.
- 1814 Publication of the *History of the Expedition under the Command of Captains Lewis and Clark*, to which Jefferson contributed a biography of Lewis.
- 1814-1819 Devoted himself to the problem of public education in Virginia, his efforts creating the University of Virginia in 1819.
- 1815 Gave up the presidency of the American Philosophical Society, an office he had held for eighteen years.
- 1819 Bankrupt as the result of the failure of Wilson Cary Nicholas, whose note for \$20,000 Jefferson had endorsed.
- 1826 July 4, died at Monticello.

BIOGRAPHIES: Dumas Malone is at work upon a definitive life, of which the first volume, *Jefferson the Virginian*, Little, Brown, appeared in 1948. Two of the older lives are still valuable: H. S. Randall, *The Life of Thomas Jefferson*, 3 vols., New York, 1858 (eulogy); and S. N. Randolph, *The Domestic Life of Thomas Jefferson*, Harper, 1871. Later nineteenth-century biographies are deficient in documentary material made public in the twentieth century. Among recent biographers these are good: Paul Leicester Ford, *Thomas Jefferson*, Elson and Company, Boston, 1904; D. S. Muzzey, *Thomas Jefferson*, Scribner, 1918; Marie Kimball, *Jefferson, the Road to Glory, 1743 to 1776*, Coward-McCann, 1943; *Jefferson: War and Peace*, Coward-McCann, 1947; and *Jefferson: The Scene of Europe, 1784 to 1789*, Coward-McCann, 1950; A. J. Nock, *Jefferson*, Harcourt, Brace, 1926. Claude G. Bowers, *Jefferson and Hamilton*, Houghton Mifflin, 1925, treats vigorously a central portion of Jefferson's political career and is followed by *Jefferson in Power*, 1936, and preceded by *Young Jefferson*, 1945; Gilbert Chinard, *Thomas Jefferson: The Apostle of Americanism*, Little, Brown, 1929, traces his intellectual development. Excellent also is Adrienne Koch, *The Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson*, Columbia, 1943. For special phases of Jefferson consult the bibliography appended to the life by Dumas Malone in the *Dictionary of American Biography* and that in *Literary History of the United States*, Vol. III, pp. 596-602.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND EDITIONS: The most nearly complete formal bibliography is W. H. Wise and J. W. Cronin, *A Bibliography of Thomas Jefferson*, River-

ford Publishing Company, Washington, 1935. The *Calendar of the Correspondence of Thomas Jefferson*, 3 vols., U. S. Department of State, 1894-1903, is a useful index to Jefferson material in the Library of Congress. A definitive edition, to run to fifty-two volumes, under the editorship of Julian P. Boyd has been begun, two volumes of the *Papers of Thomas Jefferson* having appeared in 1950 from the Princeton University Press. The *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. by P. L. Ford, 10 vols., Putnam, 1892-99, is the earliest good edition, but this should be supplemented by the Memorial Edition, 20 vols., Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1905. Particularly since 1916 have there been numerous additions to the published correspondence. See *Thomas Jefferson Correspondence Printed from Originals in the Collections of William K. Bixby*, ed. by W. C. Ford, Boston, 1916; Gilbert Chinard, *Volney et l'Amérique*, Paris, 1923, *Les amitiés américaines de Madame d'Houdetot, d'après sa correspondance inédite avec Benjamin Franklin et Thomas Jefferson*, Paris, 1924, *Jefferson et les idéologues*, Paris, 1925, and *Trois amitiés françaises de Jefferson*, Paris, 1927; *The commonplace Book of Thomas Jefferson*, Johns Hopkins Press, 1927; *The Literary Bible of Thomas Jefferson*, Johns Hopkins Press, 1928; *The Letters of Lafayette and Jefferson*, ed. by G. Chinard, Johns Hopkins Press, 1929; and *Correspondence of Jefferson and Du Pont de Nemours*, Johns Hopkins Press, 1931; *Correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours, 1798-1817*, ed. by Dumas Malone, Houghton Mifflin, 1930; *Correspondence between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson*, ed. by Paul Wiltach, Bobbs-Merrill, 1925.

Smaller usable collections are Adrienne Koch and William Peden, ed., *Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Modern Library, 1944; and Saul K. Padover, ed., *The Complete Jefferson . . . except his Letters*, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1943.

The paradox of Thomas Jefferson is that although one edition of his writings runs to twenty volumes, and although the amount of unpublished material from his pen is incredibly large, he was not a literary man in the usual sense of the word. He seldom or never wrote to satisfy esthetic sensibility or for the purpose of fulfilling the demands of artistic form as an end in itself. Yet his prose often has "that felicitous, haunting cadence which is the peculiar quality of Jefferson's best writing," in Carl Becker's phrase; and no literary document in American history has had a wider influence or been more extensively discussed than the Declaration of Independence, just as his first Inaugural Address, like some of Lincoln's addresses, is one of the few public utterances by American Presidents which have literary distinction.

It is of course well known that Jefferson ranks with Franklin as one of the many-sided geniuses this country has produced. Architect, scientist, philologist, agriculturalist, economist, educator, lawyer, historian, sociologist, statesman—he touched every side of American life and almost every side of the eighteenth-century world. He divides with Hamilton the empire of American political opinion. He is, like Franklin, one of the great letter-writers of his generation. To attempt to represent his activities in small compass is to attempt the impossible, but the following selections give at least a taste of his best prose and include some of the most remarkable documents from his busy pen.

## IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776

THE UNANIMOUS DECLARATION OF THE  
THIRTEEN UNITED STATES OF  
AMERICA

On June 7, 1776, acting upon the instructions of Virginia, Richard Henry Lee moved (and John Adams seconded) a resolution to the effect that "these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States." The Continental Congress debated this question on June 8 and again on June 10, when they postponed further consideration for three weeks by a vote of seven states to five. But on June 11 a committee composed of Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston was appointed to draft a declaration, since the adoption of Lee's resolution was inevitable. On July 2 this resolution was adopted, a date that John Adams thought should be celebrated as the legal origin of American independence. In the meantime the committee had gone to work, and on June 28 submitted a draft of a Declaration of Independence to the Congress. This draft was principally the work of Thomas Jefferson. As soon as the Lee resolution was adopted, Congress turned to consider the report of the committee of five, which was debated July 3 and part of July 4, a number of changes (often for the better) being made. It was adopted July 4, when John Hancock signed an authenticated copy and Charles Thomson attested it. The committee of five was ordered to "superintend & correct the press"; and apparently during the night of July 4-5 John Dunlap set up and printed the Declaration in broadside form. On July 19 the Congress ordered the document engrossed on parchment and caused the title to read "The Unanimous Declaration of the 13 United States of America." On August 2, "the declaration of Independence being engrossed & compared at the table was signed by the Members." However, all the members did not sign on that date. Printed copies with names attached were first authorized in January, 1777.

It is evident from this brief account that the question of the "standard" or "correct" text of the Declaration of Independence is a difficult one. Is the proper text the original draft by Jefferson? The report of the committee? The form adopted by the Congress on July 4? Or the form finally engrossed and signed? These differ from each other (and other early manuscript copies also differ). The text here reprinted is that found in *The Declaration of Independence 1776 (Literal Print)*, Washington, Department of State, 1911.

For a study of the evolution of this famous document the student should consult Jefferson's *Autobiography* in any edition of his works; John H. Hazelton, *The Declaration of Independence: Its History*, Dodd, Mead, 1906; Carl L. Becker, *The Declaration of Independence: A Study in the History of Political Ideas*, 2d ed., Harcourt, Brace, 1942; and *The Declaration of Independence: The Evolution of the Text as Shown in Facsimiles of Various Drafts by Its Author; Issued in Conjunction with an Exhibit of These Drafts at the Library of Congress on the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the Birth of Thomas Jefferson*, Library of Congress, 1943.

WHEN in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God en-



title them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.—We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these  
 5 are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,—That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles  
 10 and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the  
 15 forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.—Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the  
 20 necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.—He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and  
 25 necessary for the public good.—He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.—He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish  
 30 the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.—He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.—He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing  
 35 with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.—He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.—  
 40 He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.—He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.—He has

21. **King**—George III (1760-1820). 23. **Facts**—For a consideration, item by item, of this bill of particulars see Chaps. X and XI of Herbert Friedenwald, *The Declaration of Independence: An Interpretation and an Analysis*, Macmillan, 1904.

made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their officers, and the amount and payment of their salaries.—He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.—He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.—He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.—He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:—For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:—For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:—For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:—For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:—For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:—For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences:—For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:—For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:—For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.—He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us:—He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.—He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.—He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.—He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions. In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people. Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and corre-

6-7. **combined with others**—that is, the British Parliament. This is the only reference to the Parliament in the Declaration. 15. **neighbouring Province**—that is, Quebec. However, the provisions for extending the civil law as against the common law were never enforced. 25. **foreign Mercenaries**—that is, Hessian troops.

spondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

- 5 WE, THEREFORE, THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES; that they  
10 are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right  
15 do.—And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

[Signatures]

## [FIRST] INAUGURAL ADDRESS

MARCH 4, 1801

On February 28, 1801, Vice-President Jefferson formally notified the Senate that he “propose[d] to retire from the chair”; and on March 4 he reappeared as President-elect. He had ridden to the Capitol attended only by a bodyguard of friends, tied his horse to the “palisades,” and entered the unfinished building. “On his entering the Senate Chamber, [Aaron] Burr, who had already taken the oath of office [as Vice-President], gave up his chair, and took his seat on the right. On the left sat the Chief-Justice. Two imposing and usual figures on such occasions were absent—the late President [John Adams] and the late speaker of the House of Representatives [Theodore Sedgwick]. . . . But there was the customary attendance of other officials—and the usual crowd of friends and spectators. Mr. Jefferson rose and delivered the following Inaugural Address” (Randall, *Life of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 2, p. 630). At the conclusion of the address Jefferson took the oath.

The text here reprinted is that of the Memorial Edition, Vol. 3, pp. 317-23. A facsimile of the original manuscript may be found in that edition.

### FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS—

- Called upon to undertake the duties of the first executive office of our country, I avail myself of the presence of that portion of my fellow citizens which  
20 is here assembled, to express my grateful thanks for the favor with which they have been pleased to look towards me, to declare a sincere consciousness that the task is above my talents, and that I approach it with those anxious and awful presentiments which the greatness of the charge and the weakness of  
25 my powers so justly inspire. A rising nation, spread over a wide and fruitful

2. **denounces**—gives formal notice of.

land, traversing all the seas with the rich productions of their industry, engaged in commerce with nations who feel power and forget right, advancing rapidly to destinies beyond the reach of mortal eye—when I contemplate these transcendent objects, and see the honor, the happiness, and the hopes of this beloved country committed to the issue and auspices of this day, I shrink from the contemplation, and humble myself before the magnitude of the undertaking. Utterly indeed, should I despair, did not the presence of many whom I here see remind me, that in the other high authorities provided by our constitution, I shall find resources of wisdom, of virtue, and of zeal, on which to rely under all difficulties. To you, then, gentlemen, who are charged with the sovereign functions of legislation and to those associated with you, I look with encouragement for that guidance and support which may enable us to steer with safety the vessel in which we are all embarked amidst the conflicting elements of a troubled world.

During the contest of opinion through which we have passed, the animation of discussions and of exertions has sometimes worn an aspect which might impose on strangers unused to think freely and to speak and to write what they think; but this being now decided by the voice of the nation, announced according to the rules of the constitution, all will, of course, arrange themselves under the will of the law, and unite in common efforts for the common good. All, too, will bear in mind this sacred principle, that though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will, to be rightful, must be reasonable; that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal laws must protect, and to violate which would be oppression. Let us, then, fellow citizens, unite with one heart and one mind. Let us restore to social intercourse that harmony and affection without which liberty and even life itself are but dreary things. And let us reflect that having banished from our land that religious intolerance under which mankind so long bled and suffered, we have yet gained little if we countenance a political intolerance as despotic, as wicked, and capable of as bitter and bloody persecutions. During the throes and convulsions of the ancient world, during the agonizing spasms of infuriated man, seeking through blood and slaughter his long-lost liberty, it was not wonderful that the agitation of the billows should reach even this distant and peaceful shore; that this should be more felt and feared by some and less by others; that this should divide opinions as to measures of safety. But every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle. We have called by different names brethren of the same principle. We are all republicans—we are all federalists. If there be any among us who would wish to dissolve this Union or to change its republican form, let them stand undisturbed as monuments of the safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it. I know, indeed, that some honest men fear that a republican government cannot be strong; that this government is not strong enough. But would the honest patriot, in the full tide of successful experiment, abandon a govern-

1. **traversing**—moving across. 5. **auspices**—here, happy omens. 15. **contest of opinion**—The election of 1800 had been bitterly fought. 18. **announced**—in the facsimile of the manuscript, “enounced.” 31. **ancient world**—that is, the “Old Regime” in Europe. **spasms** is of course an oblique reference to the Reign of Terror in the French Revolution.

ment which has so far kept us free and firm, on the theoretic and visionary fear that this government, the world's best hope, may by possibility want energy to preserve itself? I trust not. I believe this, on the contrary, the strongest government on earth. I believe it is the only one where every man, at the call of the law, would fly to the standard of the law, and would meet invasions of the public order as his own personal concern. Sometimes it is said that man cannot be trusted with the government of himself. Can he, then, be trusted with the government of others? Or have we found angels in the form of kings to govern him? Let history answer this question.

Let us, then, with courage and confidence pursue our own federal and republican principles, our attachment to our union and representative government. Kindly separated by nature and a wide ocean from the exterminating havoc of one quarter of the globe; too high-minded to endure the degradations of the others; possessing a chosen country, with room enough for our descendants to the hundredth and thousandth generation; entertaining a due sense of our equal right to the use of our own faculties, to the acquisitions of our own industry, to honor and confidence from our fellow citizens, resulting not from birth but from our actions and their sense of them; enlightened by a benign religion, professed, indeed, and practiced in various forms, yet all of them inculcating honesty, truth, temperance, gratitude, and the love of man; acknowledging and adoring an over-ruling Providence, which by all its dispensations proves that it delights in the happiness of man here and his greater happiness hereafter; with all these blessings, what more is necessary to make us a happy and a prosperous people? Still one thing more, fellow citizens—a wise and frugal government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government, and this is necessary to close the circle of our felicities.

About to enter, fellow citizens, on the exercise of duties which comprehend everything dear and valuable to you, it is proper that you should understand what I deem the essential principles of our government, and consequently those which ought to shape its administration. I will compress them within the narrowest compass they will bear, stating the general principle, but not all its limitations. Equal and exact justice to all men, of whatever state or persuasion, religious or political; peace, commerce, and honest friendship, with all nations—entangling alliances with none; the support of the state governments in all their rights, as the most competent administrations for our domestic concerns and the surest bulwarks against anti-republican tendencies; the preservation of the general government in its whole constitutional vigor, as the sheet anchor of our peace at home and safety abroad; a jealous care of the right of election by the people—a mild and safe corrective of abuses which are lopped by the sword of revolution where peaceable remedies are unprovided; absolute acquiescence in the decisions of the majority—the vital principle of republics, from which is no appeal but to force[,] the vital principle

2. by possibility—that is, perhaps. 35. state—that is, state of life, status.

and immediate parent of despotism; a well-disciplined militia—our best reliance in peace and for the first moments of war, till regulars may relieve them; the supremacy of the civil over the military authority; economy in the public expense, that labor may be lightly burdened; the honest payment of our debts and sacred preservation of the public faith; encouragement of agriculture, and of commerce as its handmaid; the diffusion of information and arraignment of all abuses at the bar of public reason; freedom of religion; freedom of the press; and freedom of person under the protection of the *habeas corpus*; and trial by juries impartially selected—these principles form the bright constellation which has gone before us, and guided our steps through an age of revolution and reformation. The wisdom of our sages and the blood of our heroes have been devoted to their attainment. They should be the creed of our political faith—the text of civil instruction—the touchstone by which to try the services of those we trust; and should we wander from them in moments of error or alarm, let us hasten to retrace our steps and to regain the road which alone leads to peace, liberty, and safety.

I repair, then, fellow citizens, to the post you have assigned me. With experience enough in subordinate offices to have seen the difficulties of this, the greatest of all, I have learned to expect that it will rarely fall to the lot of imperfect man to retire from this station with the reputation and the favor which bring him into it. Without pretensions to that high confidence you reposed in our first and great revolutionary character, whose preëminent services had entitled him to the first place in his country's love, and destined for him the fairest page in the volume of faithful history, I ask so much confidence only as may give firmness and effect to the legal administration of your affairs. I shall often go wrong through defect of judgment. When right, I shall often be thought wrong by those whose positions will not command a view of the whole ground. I ask your indulgence for my own errors, which will never be intentional; and your support against the errors of others, who may condemn what they would not if seen in all its parts. The approbation implied by your suffrage is a consolation to me for the past; and my future solicitude will be to retain the good opinion of those who have bestowed it in advance, to conciliate that of others by doing them all the good in my power, and to be instrumental to the happiness and freedom of all.

Relying, then, on the patronage of your good will, I advance with obedience to the work, ready to retire from it whenever you become sensible how much better choice it is in your power to make. And may that Infinite Power which rules the destinies of the universe, lead our councils to what is best, and give them a favorable issue for your peace and prosperity.

8-9. **habeas corpus**—a legal writ requiring anyone having another in his custody to produce his prisoner in person before the court issuing the writ. 17. **repair**—that is, betake myself. 22. **revolutionary character**—that is, Washington. 35. **patronage**—that is, favoring support.

## NOTES ON VIRGINIA

In 1781, being still in Virginia, Jefferson received from M. de Marbois of the French legation in Philadelphia a letter containing a series of inquiries about Virginia. Jefferson used this letter as an occasion to codify a series of memoranda about his native commonwealth; his friends desiring copies, when he went to Paris, he had two hundred printed under the title *Notes on the State of Virginia* (dated 1782; issued in 1784-85). This was translated into French when, to prevent the issuance of a bad translation into English, he arranged with John Stockdale, a London publisher, to issue an authorized version in 1787. This was reprinted in Philadelphia in 1788. In an edition of 1800 additional material from Jefferson's hand appeared. At his death a printed copy kept by him with a revised text and many manuscript notes was made the basis of an edition of 1853. However, the present text is the modernized text of the Memorial Edition.

The *Notes on Virginia* is in twenty-three sections, each answering a specific question about Virginia. The order of inquiry is roughly from geography, natural resources, flora and fauna to the sociology, political economy, and history of the commonwealth. During the course of the book Jefferson takes occasion to refute the theory of Buffon that plants, animals, and men are smaller in the New World than in the Old and to start a good many scientific speculations, notably in geology. The selection here given, however, deals with scenery. It is important in American literature for two reasons. The description of the meeting of the Shenandoah and the Potomac became a model for landscape description, the formula of which was followed by many subsequent writers; and the description set a fashion for seeing American scenery in terms of the sublime.

## QUERY IV

## A NOTICE OF ITS MOUNTAINS?

FOR THE particular geography of our mountains I must refer to Fry and Jefferson's map of Virginia; and to Evans' analysis of this map of America, for a more philosophical view of them than is to be found in any other work. It is worthy of notice, that our mountains are not solitary and scattered confusedly over the face of the country; but that they commence at about one hundred and fifty miles from the sea-coast, are disposed in ridges, one behind another, running nearly parallel with the sea-coast, though rather approaching it as they advance north-eastwardly. To the south-west, as the tract of country between the sea-coast and the Mississippi becomes narrower, the mountains converge into a single ridge, which, as it approaches the Gulf of Mexico, subsides into plain country, and gives rise to some of the waters

1-2. **Fry and Jefferson's map of Virginia**—by Joshua Fry and Peter Jefferson, who surveyed part of the boundary line between Virginia and North Carolina in 1749. This map was printed in London in 1751 and reprinted thereafter. It should be remembered that West Virginia was then part of Virginia. **Evans' analysis**—apparently a reference to a *General Map of the Middle British Colonies in America*, London, 1755. 3. **philosophical**—that is, scientific.

of that gulf, and particularly to a river called the Apalachicola, probably from the Apalachies, an Indian nation formerly residing on it. Hence the mountains giving rise to that river, and seen from its various parts, were called the Apalachian mountains, being in fact the end or termination only of the great ridges passing through the continent. European geographers, however, extended the name northwardly as far as the mountains extended; some giving it, after their separation into different ridges, to the Blue Ridge, others to the North Mountain, others to the Alleghany, others to the Laurel Ridge, as may be seen by their different maps. But the fact I believe is, that none of these ridges were ever known by that name to the inhabitants, either native or emigrant, but as they saw them so called in European maps. In the same direction, generally, are the veins of limestone, coal, and other minerals hitherto discovered; and so range the falls of our great rivers. But the courses of the great rivers are at right angles with these. James and Potomac penetrate through all the ridges of mountains eastward of the Alleghany; that is, broken by no water course. It is in fact the spine of the country between the Atlantic on one side, and the Mississippi and St. Lawrence on the other. The passage of the Potomac through the Blue Ridge is, perhaps, one of the most stupendous scenes in nature. You stand on a very high point of land. On your right comes up the Shenandoah, having ranged along the foot of the mountain an hundred miles to seek a vent. On your left approaches the Potomac, in quest of a passage also. In the moment of their junction, they rush together against the mountain, rend it asunder, and pass off to the sea. The first glance of this scene hurries our senses into the opinion, that this earth has been created in time, that the mountains were formed first, that the rivers began to flow afterwards, that in this place, particularly, they have been dammed up by the Blue Ridge of mountains, and have formed an ocean which filled the whole valley; that continuing to rise they have at length broken over at this spot, and have torn the mountain down from its summit to its base. The piles of rock on each hand, but particularly on the Shenandoah, the evident marks of their disrapture and avulsion from their beds by the most powerful agents of nature, corroborate the impression. But the distant finishing which nature has given to the picture, is of a very different character. It is a true contrast to the foreground. It is as placid and delightful as that is wild and tremendous. For the mountain being cloven asunder, she presents to your eye, through the cleft, a small catch of smooth blue horizon, at an infinite distance in the plain country, inviting you, as it were, from the riot and tumult roaring around, to pass through the breach and participate of the calm below. Here the eye ultimately composes itself; and that way, too, the road happens actually to lead. You cross the Potomac above the junction, pass along its side through the base of the mountain for three miles, its terrible precipices hanging in fragments over you, and within about twenty miles reach Fredericktown, and the fine

1. **Apalachicola**—formed by the junction of the Chattahoochee and Flint rivers in south-west Georgia and running 90 miles to the Gulf of Mexico. 8. **North Mountain**—the Shenandoah or Great North Mountains. 17-18. **The passage of the Potomac**—The Shenandoah joins the Potomac at the modern town of Harpers Ferry. 21. **vent**—outlet. 31. **avulsion**—tearing away. 32. **distant finishing**—in the general sense of perspective. 36. **catch**—fragment, glimpse. 42. **Fredericktown**—the modern Frederick, Maryland.



country round that. This scene is worth a voyage across the Atlantic. Yet here, as in the neighborhood of the Natural Bridge, are people who have passed their lives within half a dozen miles, and have never been to survey these monuments of a war between rivers and mountains, which must have shaken  
 5 the earth itself to its centre. See Appendix (B).

The height of our mountains has not yet been estimated with any degree of exactness. The Alleghany being the great ridge which divides the waters of the Atlantic from those of the Mississippi, its summit is doubtless more elevated above the ocean than that of any other mountain. But its relative height,  
 10 compared with the base on which it stands, is not so great as that of some others, the country rising behind the successive ridges like the steps of stairs. The mountains of the Blue Ridge, and of these the Peaks of Otter, are thought to be of a greater height, measured from their base, than any others in our country, and perhaps in North America. From data, which may found a toler-  
 15 able conjecture, we suppose the highest peak to be about four thousand feet perpendicular, which is not a fifth part of the height of the mountains of South America, nor one-third of the height which would be necessary in our latitude to preserve ice in the open air unmelted through the year. The ridge of mountains next beyond the Blue Ridge, called by us the North mountain, is  
 20 of the greatest extent; for which reason they were named by the Indians the endless mountains.

A substance supposed to be Pumice, found floating on the Mississippi, has induced a conjecture that there is a volcano on some of its waters; and as these are mostly known to their sources, except the Missouri, our expectations of  
 25 verifying the conjecture would of course be led to the mountains which divide the waters of the Mexican Gulf from those of the South Sea; but no volcano having ever yet been known at such a distance from the sea, we must rather suppose that this floating substance has been erroneously deemed Pumice.

#### LETTER TO PETER CARR\*

30

Paris, August 19, 1785

DEAR PETER,—I received, by Mr. Mazzei, your letter of April the 20th. I am much mortified to hear that you have lost so much time; and that when you arrived in Williamsburg, you were not at all advanced from what you were

5. **Appendix (B)**—not here reprinted. In it Jefferson speculates further upon the geological history of this region and of Pennsylvania. 12. **Blue Ridge . . . Peaks of Otter**—The highest mountains in Virginia are Mount Rogers, 5,719 feet, and Whitetop, 5,520 feet, in the extreme southwestern part of the state. At Harpers Ferry the altitude is about 300 feet. Mt. Washington, in the New Hampshire White Mountains, rises to 6,293 feet. 16-17. **mountains of South America**—that is, the Andes. Mt. Aconcagua rises to 22,860 feet. 22. **Pumice**—spongy lava. 24. **known to their sources**—Lake Itasca, the true source of the Mississippi River, was first discovered by Schoolcraft in 1832. 26. **South Sea**—Pacific Ocean. \* **Peter Carr**—one of Jefferson's nephews, born in 1770, the son of Dabney and Martha (Jefferson) Carr. After his father's death in 1773 Peter Carr became Jefferson's ward, and later his private secretary. The text of this and the following letters is that of the Memorial Edition. 31. **Mazzei**—Philip Mazzei, 1730-1814, agent of Virginia during the American Revolution, who, returning briefly from Europe in 1783, sailed from New York June 16, 1785. 33. **Williamsburg**—that is, the College of William and Mary.

when you left Monticello. Time now begins to be precious to you. Every day you lose will retard a day your entrance on that public stage whereon you may begin to be useful to yourself. However, the way to repair the loss is to improve the future time. I trust, that with your dispositions, even the acquisition of science is a pleasing employment. I can assure you, that the possession of it is, what (next to an honest heart) will above all things render you dear to your friends, and give you fame and promotion in your own country. When your mind shall be well improved with science, nothing will be necessary to place you in the highest points of view, but to pursue the interests of your country, the interests of your friends, and your own interests also, with the purest integrity, the most chaste honor. The defect of these virtues can never be made up by all the other acquirements of body and mind. Make these, then, your first object. Give up money, give up fame, give up science, give the earth itself and all it contains, rather than do an immoral act. And never suppose, that in any possible situation, or under any circumstances, it is best for you to do a dishonorable thing, however slightly so it may appear to you. Whenever you are to do a thing, though it can never be known but to yourself, ask yourself how you would act were all the world looking at you, and act accordingly. Encourage all your virtuous dispositions, and exercise them whenever an opportunity arises; being assured that they will gain strength by exercise, as a limb of the body does, and that exercise will make them habitual. From the practice of the purest virtue, you may be assured you will derive the most sublime comforts in every moment of life, and in the moment of death. If ever you find yourself environed with difficulties and perplexing circumstances, out of which you are at a loss how to extricate yourself, do what is right, and be assured that that will extricate you the best out of the worst situations. Though you cannot see, when you take one step, what will be the next, yet follow truth, justice, and plain dealing, and never fear their leading you out of the labyrinth, in the easiest manner possible. The knot which you thought a Gordian one will untie itself before you. Nothing is so mistaken as the supposition, that a person is to extricate himself from a difficulty, by intrigue, by chicanery, by dissimulation, by trimming, by an untruth, by an injustice. This increases the difficulties tenfold; and those, who pursue these methods, get themselves so involved at length, that they can turn no way but their infamy becomes more exposed. It is of great importance to set a resolution, not to be shaken, never to tell an untruth. There is no vice so mean, so pitiful, so contemptible; and he who permits himself to tell a lie once, finds it much easier to do it a second and third time, till at length it becomes habitual; he tells lies without attending to it, and truths without the world's believing him. This falsehood of the tongue leads to that of the heart, and in time depraves all its good dispositions.

An honest heart being the first blessing, a knowing head is the second. It is time for you now to begin to be choice in your reading; to begin to pursue a regular course in it; and not to suffer yourself to be turned to the right or

5. science—knowledge. 30. Gordian knot—Gordius, king of Phrygia, tied a knot about his chariot, prophesying that whoever could loose it would rule Asia. Alexander the Great cut the knot with his sword.

left by reading anything out of that course. I have long ago digested a plan for you, suited to the circumstances in which you will be placed. This I will detail to you, from time to time, as you advance. For the present, I advise you to begin a course of ancient history, reading everything in the original and not in translations. First read Goldsmith's history of Greece. This will give you a digested view of that field. Then take up ancient history in the detail, reading the following books, in the following order: Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophontis Anabasis, Arrian, Quintus Curtius, Diodorus Siculus, Justin. This shall form the first stage of your historical reading, and is all I need mention to you now. The next will be of Roman history. From that, we will come down to modern history. In Greek and Latin poetry, you have read or will read at school, Virgil, Terence, Horace, Anacreon, Theocritus, Homer, Euripides, Sophocles. Read also Milton's "Paradise Lost," Shakspeare, Ossian, Pope's and Swift's works, in order to form your style in your own language. In morality, read Epictetus, Xenophontis Memorabilia, Plato's Socratic dialogues, Cicero's philosophies, Antoninus, and Seneca. In order to assure a certain progress in this reading, consider what hours you have free from the school and the exercises of the school. Give about two of them, every day, to exercise; for health must not be sacrificed to learning. A strong body makes the mind strong. As to the species of exercise I advise the gun. While this gives a moderate exercise to the body, it gives boldness, enterprise, and independence to the mind. Games played with the ball, and others of that nature, are too violent for the body, and stamp no character on the mind. Let your gun, therefore, be the constant companion of your walks. Never think of taking a book with you. The object of walking is to relax the mind. You should therefore not permit yourself even to think while you walk; but divert yourself by the objects surrounding you. Walking is the best possible exercise. Habituate yourself to walk very far. The Europeans value themselves on hav-

5. Goldsmith's history of Greece—*The Grecian History, from the Earliest State to the Death of Alexander the Great*, 2 vols., London, 1774, a compilation attributed to Goldsmith. 7-8. Herodotus . . . Justin—Herodotus, the "father of history," in the fifth century, B.C., wrote a history in nine books named for the Muses. Thucydides (471-401? B.C.) wrote a history of the Peloponnesian War. Xenophontis Anabasis—the *Anabasis* is the story of the retreat of ten thousand Greeks from Persia, by Xenophon (444-354? B.C.). Arrian (A.D. 90-post 146) wrote a history of Alexander the Great in seven books, as did Quintus (Rufus) Curtius, who lived in the first century A.D. Diodorus Siculus, a contemporary of Julius Caesar and of Augustus, compiled a *Bibliotheca Historica* or universal history down to Caesar's Gallic wars. Justin, second century A.D., wrote a history of the Macedonian monarchy, called *Historiarum Philippicarum Libri XLIV*. Jefferson is therefore recommending a historical diet heavily militarized! 10. Roman history—"Livy, Sallust, Caesar, Cicero's epistles, Suetonius, Tacitus, Gibbon." (Footnote in the Memorial Edition) 12-13. Virgil . . . Sophocles—Of these familiar names only two may require a gloss—Anacreon (550-465? B.C.), to whom a series of lyric odes celebrating wine and love is wrongly attributed; and Theocritus, a Greek pastoral poet of the third century B.C. 13. Ossian—A series of three books, *Fragments of Ancient Poetry Collected in the Highlands of Scotland* (1760), *Fingal* (1762), and *Temora* (1763), was supposed to be translations of an authentic Gaelic poet named Ossian. They were compiled, by James Macpherson (1736-1796). 15-16. Epictetus . . . Seneca—Epictetus, who lived under the emperors Nero and Domitian, left behind him a short manual of his teachings, the *Enchiridion*, compiled by Arrian. Xenophontis Memorabilia is Xenophon's account of Socrates. Plato's Socratic dialogues require no gloss. Cicero's philosophies—a blanket reference to nine works by Cicero (106-43 B.C.). Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (161-180), whose philosophical work is usually called *Meditations*. L. Annaeus Seneca (?5 B.C.-A.D. 50), whose essays, especially *De Beneficiis*, are in question.

ing subdued the horse to the uses of man; but I doubt whether we have not lost more than we have gained, by the use of this animal. No one has occasioned so much the degeneracy of the human body. An Indian goes on foot nearly as far in a day, for a long journey, as an enfeebled white does on his horse; and he will tire the best horses. There is no habit you will value so much as that of walking far without fatigue. I would advise you to take your exercise in the afternoon: not because it is the best time for exercise, for certainly it is not; but because it is the best time to spare from your studies; and habit will soon reconcile it to health, and render it nearly as useful as if you gave to that the more precious hours of the day. A little walk of half an hour, in the morning, when you first rise, is advisable also. It shakes off sleep, and produces other good effects in the animal economy. Rise at a fixed and early hour, and go to bed at a fixed and early hour also. Sitting up late at night is injurious to the health, and not useful to the mind. Having ascribed proper hours to exercise, divide what remain (I mean of your vacant hours) into three portions. Give the principal to History, the other two, which should be shorter, to Philosophy and Poetry. Write to me once every month or two, and let me know the progress you make. Tell me in what manner you employ every hour in the day. The plan I have proposed for you is adapted to your present situation only. When that is changed, I shall propose a corresponding change of plan. I have ordered the following books to be sent to you from London, to the care of Mr. Madison: Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon's *Hellenics*, *Anabasis* and *Memorabilia*, Cicero's works, Baretti's Spanish and English Dictionary, Martin's *Philosophical Grammar*, and Martin's *Philosophia Britannica*. I will send you the following from hence: Bezout's *Mathematics*, De la Lande's *Astronomy*, Muschenbrock's *Physics*, Quintus Curtius, Justin, a Spanish Grammar, and some Spanish books. You will observe that Martin, Bezout, De la Lande, and Muschenbrock, are not in the preceding plan. They are not to be opened till you go to the University. You are now, I expect, learning French. You must push this; because the books which will be put into your hands when you advance into Mathematics, Natural philosophy, Natural history, &c., will be mostly French, these sciences being better treated by the French than the English writers. Our future connection with Spain renders that the most necessary of the modern languages, after the French. When you become a public man, you may have occasion for it, and the circumstance of your possessing that language may give you a preference over other candidates. I have nothing further to add for the present, but husband well your time,

2. **No one**—that is, no one other thing. 22. **Madison**—James Madison (1751-1836), disciple of Jefferson and fourth President. **Xenophon's *Hellenics***—a continuation of the history of Thucydides. 23-24. **Baretti's . . . Dictionary**—*Dictionary of Spanish and English and English and Spanish* by Giuseppe Marc' Antonio Baretti. Jefferson presumably refers to the 2d edition, London, 1778. 24. **Martin**—Benjamin Martin, *The Philosophical Grammar*, London, 1735, which reached a seventh edition in 1769; and *Philosophia Briannia; or, a New . . . System of the Newtonian Philosophy, Astronomy and Geography*, 2 vols., Reading, 1747; 3d ed., 3 vols., London, 1771. 25-26. **Bezout . . . Muschenbrock**—Etienne Bezout, *Cours de mathématiques*, 5 parts, Paris, 1764-69, often reprinted; Joseph Jérôme Le Français De la Lande, *Abrégé d'astronomie*, Paris, 1774; Pieter van Muschenbrock, *Cours de physique expérimentale et mathématique* (French translation), 3 vols., Leyden, 1769. 31-32. **Natural philosophy, Natural history**—that is, the physical and biological sciences.

cherish your instructors, strive to make everybody your friend; and be assured that nothing will be so pleasing as your success to, Dear Peter,

Yours affectionately.

## LETTER TO PETER CARR

Paris, August 10, 1787

5 DEAR PETER,—I have received your two letters of December the 30th and April the 18th, and am very happy to find by them, as well as by letters from Mr Wythe, that you have been so fortunate as to attract his notice and good will; I am sure you will find this to have been one of the most fortunate events of your life, as I have ever been sensible it was of mine. I enclose you a sketch  
10 of the sciences to which I would wish you to apply, in such order as Mr. Wythe shall advise; I mention, also, the books in them worth your reading, which submit to his correction. Many of these are among your father's books, which you should have brought to you. As I do not recollect those of them not in his library, you must write to me for them making out a catalogue of  
15 such as you think you shall have occasion for, in eighteen months from the date of your letter, and consulting Mr. Wythe on the subject. To this sketch, I will add a few particular observations:

1. Italian. I fear the learning this language will confound your French and Spanish. Being all of them degenerated dialects of the Latin, they are apt to  
20 mix in conversation. I have never seen a person speaking the three languages, who did not mix them. It is a delightful language, but late events having rendered the Spanish more useful, lay it aside to prosecute that.

2. Spanish. Bestow great attention on this, and endeavor to acquire an accurate knowledge of it. Our future connections with Spain and Spanish America, will render that language a valuable acquisition. The ancient history of  
25 that part of America, too, is written in that language. I send you a dictionary.

3. Moral Philosophy. I think it lost time to attend lectures on this branch. He who made us would have been a pitiful bungler, if he had made the rules of our moral conduct a matter of science. For one man of science, there are  
30 thousands, who are not. What would have become of them? Man was destined for society. His morality, therefore, was to be formed to this object. He was endowed with a sense of right and wrong, merely relative to this. This sense is as much a part of his nature, as the sense of hearing, seeing, feeling; it is the true foundation of morality, and not the *το καλον*, truth, &c., as fanciful  
35 writers have imagined. The moral sense, or conscience, is as much a part of man, as his leg or arm. It is given to all human beings in a stronger or

7. Wythe—George Wythe (1726-1806), Jefferson's early mentor, occupant of the first professorship in law ever established in the United States, and known as the "Virginian Aristides." 12. father—that is, Dabney Carr. 21. late events—In 1785 Spain sent Gardoqui to the United States to negotiate a treaty concerning the navigation of the Mississippi, commercial relations, and the effectuation of certain clauses in the Treaty of Peace of 1783. The negotiations proved futile. By Western Americans Spain was charged with stirring up the Indians; and the national government was disturbed about the fixing of the Florida boundary line. 25. ancient history—that is, early history. 34. *το καλον*—the good.

weaker degree, as force of members is given them in a greater or less degree. It may be strengthened by exercise, as may any particular limb of the body. This sense is submitted, indeed, in some degree, to the guidance of reason; but it is a small stock which is required for this: even a less one than what we call common sense. State a moral case to a ploughman and a professor. 5 The former will decide it as well, and often better than the latter, because he has not been led astray by artificial rules. In this branch, therefore, read good books, because they will encourage, as well as direct your feelings. The writings of Sterne, particularly, form the best course of morality that ever was written. Besides these, read the books mentioned in the enclosed paper; and, 10 above all things, lose no occasion of exercising your dispositions to be grateful, to be generous, to be charitable, to be humane, to be true, just, firm, orderly, courageous, &c. Consider every act of this kind, as an exercise which will strengthen your moral faculties and increase your worth.

4. Religion. Your reason is now mature enough to examine this object. In the first place, divest yourself of all bias in favor of novelty and singularity of opinion. Indulge them in any other subject, rather than that of religion. It is too important, and the consequences of error may be too serious. On the other hand, shake off all the fears and servile prejudices, under which weak minds are servilely crouched. Fix reason firmly in her seat, and call to her 20 tribunal every fact, every opinion. Question with boldness even the existence of a God; because, if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason, than that of blindfolded fear. You will naturally examine first, the religion of your own country. Read the Bible, then, as you would read Livy or Tacitus. The facts which are within the ordinary course of nature, you will believe on the authority of the writer, as you do those of the same kind 25 in Livy and Tacitus. The testimony of the writer weighs in their favor, in one scale, and their not being against the laws of nature, does not weigh against them. But those facts in the Bible which contradict the laws of nature must be examined with more care, and under a variety of faces. Here you must recur to the pretensions of the writer to inspiration from God. Examine upon what evidence his pretensions are founded, and whether that evidence is so strong, as that its falsehood would be more improbable than a change in the laws of nature, in the case he relates. For example, in the book of Joshua, we are told, the sun stood still several hours. Were we to read that fact in 35 Livy or Tacitus, we should class it with their showers of blood, speaking of statues, beasts, etc. But it is said, that the writer of that book was inspired. Examine, therefore, candidly, what evidence there is of his having been inspired. The pretension is entitled to your inquiry, because millions believe it. On the other hand, you are astronomer enough to know how contrary it is to the law of nature that a body revolving on its axis, as the earth does, should 40 have stopped, should not, by that sudden stoppage, have prostrated animals, trees, buildings, and should after a certain time have resumed its revolution,

9. *Sterne*—Collected editions of Laurence Sterne's writings were published in Dublin in 1779 and in London in 1780. 10. *enclosed paper*—has apparently been lost. 24-25. *Livy* . . . *Tacitus*—Titus Livius (B.C. 59-A.D. 17), author of a history of Rome from the foundation of the city to the beginning of the Christian era; C. Cornelius Tacitus (?-after 117), whose principal historical work is the *Annales*, from the death of Nero in 68. 30. *faces*—that is, aspects.

and that without a second general prostration. Is this arrest of the earth's motion, or the evidence which affirms it, most within the law of probabilities? You will next read the New Testament. It is the history of a personage called Jesus. Keep in your eye the opposite pretensions: 1, of those who say he was begotten by God, born of a virgin, suspended and reversed the laws of nature at will, and ascended bodily into heaven; and 2, of those who say he was a man of illegitimate birth, of a benevolent heart, enthusiastic mind, who set out without pretensions to divinity, ended in believing them, and was punished capitally for sedition, by being gibbeted, according to the Roman law, which punished the first commission of that offence by whipping, and the second by exile, or death *in furea*. See this Law in the Digest, Lib. 48, tit. 19.28.3 and Lipsius Lib. 2. de cruce, cap. 2. These questions are examined in the books I have mentioned, under the head of Religion, and several others. They will assist you in your inquiries; but keep your reason firmly on the watch in reading them all. Do not be frightened from this inquiry by any fear of its consequences. If it ends in a belief that there is no God, you will find incitements to virtue in the comfort and pleasantness you feel in its exercise, and the love of others which it will procure you. If you find reason to believe there is a God, a consciousness that you are acting under his eye, and that he approves you, will be a vast additional incitement; if that there be a future state, the hope of a happy existence in that increases the appetite to deserve it; if that Jesus was also a God, you will be comforted by a belief of his aid and love. In fine, I repeat, you must lay aside all prejudice on both sides, and neither believe nor reject anything, because any other persons, or description of persons, have rejected or believed it. Your own reason is the only oracle given you by heaven, and you are answerable, not for the rightness, but uprightness of the decision. I forgot to observe, when speaking of the New Testament, that you should read all the histories of Christ, as well of those whom a council of ecclesiastics have decided for us, to be Pseudo-evangelists, as those they named Evangelists. Because these Pseudo-evangelists pretended to inspiration, as much as the others, and you are to judge their pretensions by your own reason, and not by the reason of those ecclesiastics. Most of these are lost. There are some, however, still extant, collected by Fabricius, which I will endeavor to get and send you.

5. Travelling. This makes men wiser, but less happy. When men of sober age travel, they gather knowledge, which they may apply usefully for their country; but they are subject ever after to recollections mixed with regret; their affections are weakened by being extended over more objects; and they learn new habits which cannot be gratified when they return home. Young

11. *in furea*—a misprint for *in furca*, on the gallows; that is, crucifixion as legal punishment. **Digest**—There were (and are) a number of digests of the Pandects (or codes of Roman law) compiled under the Emperor Justinian. Jefferson might have used *Pandectae Justinianae in novum ordinem digestae*, London, 1782. 12. **Lipsius**—Chapter 2 of Book Two of *De Cruce Libri Tres ad sacram profanamque Historiam Utiles una cum notis* of the sixteenth-century humanist, Justus Lipsius, discusses flagellation as a precedent to crucifixion. 29. **council of ecclesiastics**—that is, Church Councils. 30. **Pseudo-evangelists**—The quickest way to understand Jefferson's reference is to read the article on "Apocryphal Gospels" in the *Hastings Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, 6:346 f. 34. **Fabricius**—Johann Albert Fabricius (1668-1736), whose *Codex Apocrypha*, 1703, is still standard.

men, who travel, are exposed to all these inconveniences in a higher degree, to others still more serious, and do not acquire that wisdom for which a previous foundation is requisite, by repeated and just observations at home. The glare of pomp and pleasure is analogous to the motion of the blood; it absorbs all their affection and attention, they are torn from it as from the only 5 good in this world, and return to their home as to a place of exile and condemnation. Their eyes are forever turned back to the object they have lost, and its recollection poisons the residue of their lives. Their first and most delicate passions are hackneyed on unworthy objects here, and they carry home the dregs, insufficient to make themselves or anybody else happy. Add 10 to this, that a habit of idleness, an inability to apply themselves to business is acquired and renders them useless to themselves and their country. These observations are founded in experience. There is no place where your pursuit of knowledge will be so little obstructed by foreign objects, as in your own country, nor any, wherein the virtues of the heart will be less exposed to be 15 weakened. Be good, be learned, and be industrious, and you will not want the aid of travelling, to render you precious to your country, dear to your friends, happy within yourself. I repeat my advice, to take a great deal of exercise, and on foot. Health is the first requisite after morality. Write to me often, and be assured of the interest I take in your success, as well as the warmth 20 of those sentiments of attachment with which I am, dear Peter, your affectionate friend.

## LETTER TO JOHN ADAMS

Alike in patriotism, opposed in political philosophy, Adams won over Jefferson in 1796 and Jefferson ousted Adams in 1801. The fierce political passions of these troubled years parted the Massachusetts Federalist and the Virginia Republican, nor was their correspondence renewed until 1812, when one was seventy-seven, the other sixty-nine. The renewal came at the instance of Adams, who on January 1, 1812, sent Jefferson "two Pieces of Homespun" and a kind note. Thus began one of the great interchanges of letters in American literature, Adams writing at least 102 epistles and Jefferson 48. But as Adams said: "Never mind if I write four letters to your one, your one is worth more than my four." The two wise old men exchanged views on the great questions of their world, and died on the same day.

The letter here reprinted is in answer to Adams's assertion, in the letters to which Jefferson refers, that the well-born and the wealthy are necessary "in the constitution of human nature, and wrought into the fabric of the universe." He quotes Theognis to show that this was true "five hundred and forty-four years before Jesus Christ." In his second letter he says that "the five pillars of aristocracy are beauty, wealth, birth, genius, and virtue," and that "this great fact in the natural history of man" cannot be "waved out of sight, by a legislator, by a professed writer upon civil government, and upon constitutions of civil government."

Monticello, October 28, 1813.

DEAR SIR,—According to the reservation between us, of taking up one of the subjects of our correspondence at a time, I turn to your letters of August the 25 16th and September the 2d. . . .

9. **passions**—that is, emotions, sensibilities. 24. **reservation**—condition.



It is probable that our difference of opinion may, in some measure, be produced by a difference of character in those among whom we live. From what I have seen of Massachusetts and Connecticut myself, and still more from what I have heard, and the character given of the former by yourself (volume I, page 111), who know them so much better, there seems to be in those two States a traditionary reverence for certain families, which has rendered the offices of the government nearly hereditary in those families. I presume that from an early period of your history, members of those families happening to possess virtue and talents, have honestly exercised them for the good of the people, and by their services have endeared their names to them. In coupling Connecticut with you, I mean it politically only, not morally. For having made the Bible the common law of their land, they seem to have modeled their morality on the story of Jacob and Laban. But although this hereditary succession to office with you, may, in some degree, be founded in real family merit, yet in a much higher degree, it has proceeded from your strict alliance of Church and State. These families are canonized in the eyes of the people on common principles, "you tickle me, and I will tickle you." In Virginia we have nothing of this. Our clergy, before the Revolution, having been secured against rivalry by fixed salaries, did not give themselves the trouble of acquiring influence over the people. Of wealth, there were great accumulations in particular families, handed down from generation to generation, under the English law of entails. But the only object of ambition for the wealthy was a seat in the King's Council. All their court then was paid to the crown and its creatures; and they Philipized in all collisions between the King and the people. Hence they were unpopular; and that unpopularity continues attached to their names. A Randolph, a Carter, or a Burwell must have great personal superiority over a common competitor to be elected by the people even at this day. At the first session of our legislature after the Declaration of Independence, we passed a law abolishing entails. And this was followed by one abolishing the privilege of primogeniture, and dividing the lands of intestates equally among all their children, or other representatives. These laws, drawn by myself, laid the axe to the foot of pseudo-aristocracy. And had another which I prepared been adopted by the legislature, our work would have been complete. It was a bill for the more general diffusion of learning. This proposed to divide every county into wards of five or six miles square, like your townships; to establish in each ward a free school for reading,

4-5. (volume I, page 111)—of Adams's *Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America*, 3 vols., 3rd ed., Philadelphia, 1797. (The first two editions were printed in London.) Here Adams says: "Go into every village in New England, and you will find that the office of justice of the peace, and even the place of representative, which has ever depended only on the freest election of the people, have generally descended from generation to generation, in three or four families at most." 13. **Jacob and Laban**—Cf. Genesis Chapters 28-29. 22. **entails**—A landed estate is entailed when the line of succession is limited to a particular class, usually eldest sons. 23. **King's Council**—a body advisory to the Royal Governor in colonial Virginia. 24. **Philipized**—took the part of the king. Philip of Macedon began the conquest of the Greek city-states by bribing factions within these cities to advocate his cause. 29. **law abolishing entails**—Jefferson's own bill, passed by November 1, 1776. 30. **abolishing . . . primogeniture**—that is, a law abolishing the right of the eldest son to be the sole heir, to the prejudice of younger children. 31. **intestates**—persons who die leaving no will.

writing, and common arithmetic; to provide for the annual selection of the best subjects from these schools, who might receive, at the public expense, a higher degree of education at a district school; and from these district schools to select a certain number of the most promising subjects, to be completed at an university, where all the useful sciences should be taught. Worth and genius would thus have been sought out from every condition of life, and completely prepared by education for defeating the competition of wealth and birth for public trusts. My proposition had, for a further object, to impart to these wards those portions of self-government for which they are best qualified, by confiding to them the care of their poor, their roads, police, elections, the nomination of jurors, administration of justice in small cases, elementary exercises of militia; in short, to have made them little republics, with a warden at the head of each, for all those concerns which, being under their eye, they would better manage than the larger republics of the county or State. A general call of ward meetings by their wardens on the same day through the State would at any time produce the genuine sense of the people on any required point, and would enable the State to act in mass, as your people have so often done, and with so much effect by their town meetings. The law for religious freedom, which made a part of this system, having put down the aristocracy of the clergy, and restored to the citizen the freedom of the mind, and those of entails and descents nurturing an equality of condition among them, this on education would have raised the mass of the people to the high ground of moral respectability necessary to their own safety, and to orderly government; and would have completed the great object of qualifying them to select the veritable aristoi, for the trusts of government, to the exclusion of the pseudalists; and the same Theognis who has furnished the epigraphs of your two letters, assures us that "Ουδεμianπω, Κυρν', αγαθοι πολιν ωλεσαν ανδρες." Although this law has not yet been acted on but in a small and inefficient degree, it is still considered as before the legislature, with other bills of the revised code, not yet taken up, and I have great hope that some patriotic spirit will, at a favorable moment, call it up, and make it the keystone of the arch of our government.

With respect to aristocracy, we should further consider, that before the establishment of the American States, nothing was known to history but the man of the old world, crowded within limits either small or overcharged, and steeped in the vices which that situation generates. A government adapted to such men would be one thing; but a very different one, that for the man of these States. Here everyone may have land to labor for himself, if he chooses; or, preferring the exercise of any other industry, may exact for it such compensation as not only to afford a comfortable subsistence, but wherewith to provide for a cessation from labor in old age. Everyone, by his property, or by his satisfactory situation, is interested in the support of law and order. And such men may safely and advantageously reserve to themselves a wholesome control over their public affairs, and a degree of freedom, which in the hands of the *canaille* of the cities of Europe, would be instantly per-

27-28. Ουδεμianπω . . . ανδρες—"No city yet, Cyrrus, have good men ruined" (Theognis, 1, 43). 45. *canaille*—riffraff.

verted to the demolition and destruction of everything public and private. The history of the last twenty-five years of France, and of the last forty years in America, nay of its last two hundred years, proves the truth of both parts of this observation.

- 5 But even in Europe a change has sensibly taken place in the mind of man. Science had liberated the ideas of those who read and reflect, and the American example had kindled feeling of right in the people. An insurrection has consequently begun, of science, talents, and courage, against rank and birth, which have fallen into contempt. It has failed in its first effort, because the  
10 mobs of the cities, the instrument used for its accomplishment, debased by ignorance, poverty, and vice, could not be restrained to rational action. But the world will recover from the panic of this first catastrophe. Science is progressive, and talents and enterprise on the alert. Resort may be had to the people of the country, a more governable power from their principles and subordi-  
15 nation; and rank, and birth, and tinsel-aristocracy will finally shrink into insignificance, even there. This, however, we have no right to meddle with. It suffices for us, if the moral and physical condition of our own citizens qualifies them to select the able and good for the direction of their government, with a recurrence of elections at such short periods as will enable them to  
20 displace an unfaithful servant, before the mischief he meditates may be irremediable.

- I have thus stated my opinion on a point on which we differ, not with a view to controversy, for we are both too old to change opinions which are the result of a long life of inquiry and reflection; but on the suggestions of a  
25 former letter of yours, that we ought not to die before we have explained ourselves to each other. We acted in perfect harmony, through a long and perilous contest for our liberty and independence. A constitution has been acquired, which, though neither of us thinks perfect, yet both consider as competent to render our fellow citizens the happiest and the securest on whom the  
30 sun has ever shone. If we do not think exactly alike as to its imperfections, it matters little to our country, which, after devoting to it long lives of disinterested labor, we have delivered over to our successors in life, who will be able to take care of it and of themselves.

- Of the pamphlet on aristocracy which has been sent to you, or who may be  
35 its author, I have heard nothing but through your letter. If the person you suspect, it may be known from the quaint, mystical, and hyperbolic ideas, involved in affected, new-fangled, and pedantic terms which stamp his writings. Whatever it be, I hope your quiet is not to be affected at this day by the rudeness or intemperance of scribblers; but that you may continue in tran-  
40 quillity to live and to rejoice in the prosperity of our country, until it shall be your own wish to take your seat among the aristoi who have gone before you. Ever and affectionately yours.

2. last twenty-five years of France—that is, since 1789, the year of the beginning of the French Revolution. 6. Science—knowledge. 25. former letter—in a letter of July 15, 1813. 34. pamphlet—For this see Adams's letter to Jefferson, September 15, 1813.

## LETTER TO DR. WALTER JONES\*

Monticello, January 2, 1814.

DEAR SIR,—Your favor of November the 25th reached this place December the 21st, having been near a month on the way. How this could happen I know not, as we have two mails a week both from Fredericksburg and Richmond. It found me just returned from a long journey and absence, during which so much business had accumulated, commanding the first attentions, that another week has been added to the delay.

I deplore, with you, the putrid state into which our newspapers have passed, and the malignity, the vulgarity, and mendacious spirit of those who write for them; and I enclose you a recent sample, the production of a New England judge, as a proof of the abyss of degradation into which we are fallen. These ordures are rapidly depraving the public taste, and lessening its relish for sound food. As vehicles of information, and a curb on our functionaries, they have rendered themselves useless, by forfeiting all title to belief. That this has, in a great degree, been produced by the violence and malignity of party spirit, I agree with you; and I have read with great pleasure the paper you enclosed me on that subject, which I now return. It is at the same time a perfect model of the style of discussion which candor and decency should observe, of the tone which renders difference of opinion even amiable, and a succinct, correct, and dispassionate history of the origin and progress of party among us. It might be incorporated as it stands, and without changing a word, into the history of the present epoch, and would give to posterity a fairer view of the times than they will probably derive from other sources. In reading it with great satisfaction, there was but a single passage where I wished a little more development of a very sound and catholic idea; a single intercalation to rest it solidly on true bottom. It is near the end of the first page, where you make a statement of genuine republican maxims; saying, "that the people ought to possess as much political power as can possibly exist with the order and security of society." Instead of this, I would say, "that the people, being the only safe depository of power, should exercise in person every function which their qualifications enable them to exercise, consistently with the order and security of society; that we now find them equal to the election of those who shall be invested with their executive and legislative powers, and to act themselves in the judiciary, as judges in questions of fact; that the range of their powers ought to be enlarged," etc. This gives both the reason and exemplification of the maxim you express, "that they ought to possess as much political power," etc. I see nothing to correct either in your facts or principles.

You say that in taking General Washington on your shoulders, to bear him

\* **Dr. Walter Jones**—Dr. Walter Jones (1745-1815) took his M.D. degree at the University of Edinburgh in 1770, served as medical director of the "middle military department" in the Revolution, and was twice Congressman from Virginia. **10-11. New England judge**—It is impossible to be certain what Jefferson here refers to. **25. catholic**—general. **26. intercalation**—additional matter.

harmless through the federal <sup>1787-1791</sup> coalition, you encounter a perilous topic. I do not think so. You have given the genuine history of the course of his mind through the trying scenes in which it was engaged, and of the seductions by which it was deceived, but not depraved. I think I knew General Washington intimately and thoroughly; and were I called on to delineate his character, it should be in terms like these.

His mind was great and powerful, without being of the very first order; his penetration strong, though not so acute as that of a Newton, Bacon, or Locke; and as far as he saw, no judgment was ever sounder. It was slow in operation, being little aided by invention or imagination, but sure in conclusion. Hence the common remark of his officers, of the advantage he derived from councils of war, where hearing all suggestions, he selected whatever was best; and certainly no general ever planned his battles more judiciously. But if deranged during the course of the action, if any member of his plan was dislocated by sudden circumstances, he was slow in re-adjustment. The consequence was, that he often failed in the field, and rarely against an enemy in station, as at Boston and York. He was incapable of fear, meeting personal dangers with the calmest unconcern. Perhaps the strongest feature in his character was prudence, never acting until every circumstance, every consideration, was maturely weighed; refraining if he saw a doubt, but, when once decided, going through with his purpose, whatever obstacles opposed. His integrity was most pure, his justice the most inflexible I have ever known, no motives of interest or consanguinity, of friendship or hatred, being able to bias his decision. He was, indeed, in every sense of the words, a wise, a good, and a great man. His temper was naturally irritable and high toned; but reflection and resolution had obtained a firm and habitual ascendancy over it. If ever, however, it broke its bonds, he was most tremendous in his wrath. In his expenses he was honorable, but exact; liberal in contributions to whatever promised utility; but frowning and unyielding on all visionary projects, and all unworthy calls on his charity. His heart was not warm in its affections; but he exactly calculated every man's value, and gave him a solid esteem proportioned to it. His person, you know, was fine, his stature exactly what one would wish, his <sup>the human conduct</sup> deportment easy, erect, and noble; the best horseman of his age, and the most graceful figure that could be seen on horseback. Although in the circle of his friends, where he might be unreserved with safety, he took a free share in conversation, his colloquial talents were not above mediocrity, possessing neither copiousness of ideas, nor fluency of words. In public, when called on for a sudden opinion, he was unready, short, and embarrassed. Yet he wrote readily, rather diffusely, in an easy and correct style. This he had acquired by conversation with the world, for his education was merely reading, writing, and common arithmetic, to which he added surveying at a later day. His time was employed in action chiefly, reading little, and that only in agriculture and English history. His correspondence became necessarily extensive, and, with

8. Newton, Bacon, or Locke—Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), author of the *Principia*; Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam (1561-1626), author of the *Novum Organon*; John Locke (1632-1704), the most influential philosopher, so far as American eighteenth-century thought is concerned. 14. member—part. 17. York—Yorktown. 33. age—generation. 39-40. conversation—association, intercourse.

journalizing his agricultural proceedings, occupied most of his leisure hours within doors. On the whole, his character was, in its mass, perfect, in nothing bad, in few points indifferent; and it may truly be said, that never did nature and fortune combine more perfectly to make a man great, and to place him in the same constellation with whatever worthies have merited from man an everlasting remembrance. For his was the singular destiny and merit, of leading the armies of his country successfully through an arduous war, for the establishment of its independence; of conducting its councils through the birth of a government, new in its forms and principles, until it had settled down into a quiet and orderly train; and of scrupulously obeying the laws through the whole of his career, civil and military, of which the history of the world furnishes no other example.

How, then, can it be perilous for you to take such a man on your shoulders? I am satisfied the great body of republicans think of him as I do. We were, indeed, dissatisfied with him on his ratification of the British treaty. But this was short lived. We knew his honesty, the <sup>views</sup> ~~views~~ with which he was encompassed, and that age had already begun to relax the firmness of his purposes; and I am convinced he is more deeply seated in the love and gratitude of the republicans, than in the Pharisaical homage of the federal monarchists. For he was no monarchist from preference of his judgment. The soundness of that gave him correct views of the rights of man, and his severe justice devoted him to them. He has often declared to me that he considered our new Constitution as an experiment on the practicability of republican government, and with what dose of liberty man could be trusted for his own good; that he was determined the experiment should have a fair trial, and would lose the last drop of his blood in support of it. And these declarations he repeated to me the oftener and more pointedly, because he knew my suspicions of Colonel Hamilton's views, and probably had heard from him the same declarations which I had, to wit, "that the British constitution, with its unequal representation, corruption, and other existing abuses, was the most perfect government which had ever been established on earth, and that a reformation of those abuses would make it an impracticable government." I do believe that General Washington had not a firm confidence in the durability of our government. He was naturally distrustful of men, and inclined to gloomy apprehensions; and I was ever persuaded that a belief that we must at length end in something like a British constitution, had some weight in his adoption of the ceremonies of levees, <sup>morning receptions</sup> ~~birthdays~~, pompous meetings with Congress, and other forms of the same character, calculated to prepare us gradually for a change which he believed possible, and to let it come on with as little shock as might be to the public mind.

These are my opinions of General Washington, which I would vouch at the

1. **journalizing**—keeping a diary. 14. **republicans**—that is, members of Jefferson's party, now the Democratic party. 15. **British treaty**—the Jay treaty of 1794 with Great Britain, in which, in return for the British promise to evacuate the Northwest Territory, the United States had agreed to make humiliating concessions in commerce, shipping, and so on. 19. **federal monarchists**—that is, the Federalist party. 27-28. **Colonel Hamilton**—Alexander Hamilton (1757-1804), Secretary of the Treasury under Washington when Jefferson was Secretary of State.

- judgment seat of God, having been formed on an acquaintance of thirty years. I served with him in the Virginia legislature from 1769 to the Revolutionary war, and again a short time in Congress, until he left us to take command of the army. During the war and after it we corresponded occasionally, and in
- 5 the four years of my continuance in the office of Secretary of State, our intercourse was daily, confidential, and cordial. After I retired from that office, great and malignant pains were taken by our federal monarchists, and not entirely without effect, to make him view me as a theorist, holding French principles of government, which would lead infallibly to licentiousness and an-
- 10 archy. And to this he listened the more easily, from my known disapprobation of the British treaty. I never saw him afterwards, or these malignant insinuations should have been dissipated before his just judgment, as mists before the sun. I felt on his death, with my countrymen, that "verily a great man hath fallen this day in Israel."
- 15 More time and recollection would enable me to add many other traits of his character; but why add them to you who knew him well? And I cannot justify to myself a longer detention of your paper.

*Vale, proprieque tuum, me esse tibi persuadeas.*

**8-9. French principles**—In the period Jefferson is describing conservatives applied the word "French" as modern conservatives apply the word "Communist." **13-14. "verily . . . Israel!"**—II Samuel 3: 28. **18. Vale . . . persuadeas**—"Farewell, thou persuadest me to be especially thine."

# PHILIP FRENEAU

1752 - 1832

## I. THE YOUNG WHIG (1752-1775)

- 1752 Born in New York, January 2, of French Huguenot parentage.
- 1762 Family moved to a large estate at Mount Pleasant, near Middletown Point, New Jersey, where he was reared in refinement.
- 1765 Attended a Latin School in Penolopen, where he became acquainted with the classics and the English poets.
- 1768 Entered Princeton, a "hotbed of Whiggism." Classmate of James Madison, H. H. Brackenridge, and Aaron Burr.
- 1770 "The Power of Fancy." Includes an early statement of Freneau's deistic belief that nature is a divine revelation, a belief derived, perhaps, from his reading of Pope's *Essay on Man*.
- 1771 Graduated from Princeton. His poem for commencement, written in collaboration with Brackenridge, "The Rising Glory of America," envisaged our national "new Jerusalem" and his radical faith in "native innocence," which was to make him hostile toward a coercive Federalism.
- 1772 Tried schoolteaching on Long Island.

## II. "POET OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION" (1775-1791)

- 1775 In New York, writing poems for freedom and satirizing Britain.
- 1780 On the return voyage from his third visit to the West Indies, Freneau was captured and kept for two months on the *Scorpion*, a prison ship, and the *Hunter*, a hospital ship. This ghastly experience he recorded in "The British Prison Ship."
- 1780-1786 Wrote rapidly many poems of war propaganda glorifying our heroes and attacking Tories and the British, published in the *Freeman's Journal*. From 1781 to 1784 in the Philadelphia Post Office.
- 1784 Sailed the Atlantic and the Caribbean as master of a brig.
- 1786 Publication of *The Poems of Philip Freneau*, first collected edition.
- 1788 *The Miscellaneous Works of Mr. Philip Freneau*, containing his *Essays and Additional Poems*.
- 1789 Married Eleanor Forman. Retired from his work as a coast-line sea captain and edited the New York *Daily Advertiser*.

## III. THE DEMOCRATIC JOURNALIST (1791-1832)

- 1791-1793 Editor of *The National Gazette*, a democratic paper opposed by Fennell's *Gazette of the United States*. Freneau served also in the Department of State as Jefferson's translator of foreign languages.



- 1793 Freneau retired to Mount Pleasant, his estate, devoting himself to writing for periodicals.
- 1795-1796 Edited the weekly *Jersey Chronicle*, in which some of his best prose was published.
- 1795 *Poems Written between the Years 1768 & 1794*, by Philip Freneau, a collection containing most of his best work.
- 1797-1798 Edited *The Time-Piece and Literary Companion* in New York.
- 1799 Published *Letters on Various Interesting and Important Subjects*.
- 1803-1807 Driven by poverty to resume his earlier work as master of coast-line freight vessels.
- 1809 At Mount Pleasant. *Poems Written and Published during the American Revolutionary War*, 2 vols., including prose translations from the classics.
- 1815 *A Collection of Poems, on American Affairs, and a Variety of Other Subjects, Chiefly Moral and Political; Written between the Year 1797 and the Present Time*. (Many deal with the War of 1812.)
- 1815 Freneau's house burned, and, poverty-stricken, he moved to the town of Freehold near by.
- 1832 He was frozen to death, December 18, while trying to reach home at night in a snowstorm.

BIOGRAPHIES: Pattee has supplied a biography in Volume I of the *Poems*, mentioned below; see also M. S. Austin, *Philip Freneau, the Poet of the Revolution*, Wessells, 1901. The most recent biographical study is Lewis Leary, *That Rascal Freneau: a study in literary failure*, Rutgers University Press, 1941. See also various articles by H. H. Clark.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND EDITIONS: V. H. Paltsits, *A Bibliography of the Separate and Collected Works of Philip Freneau*, Dodd, Mead, 1903; see also the bibliography in Leary, above. *The Poems of Philip Freneau*, ed. by F. L. Pattee, Princeton University Press, 1902-07, 3 vols., is the standard edition of the poems but see Lewis Leary, ed., *The Last Poems of Philip Freneau*, Rutgers, 1946. H. H. Clark is at work on an edition of the prose. Clark's edition, *Poems of Freneau*, Harcourt, Brace, 1929, has a good critical introduction, and his text is the basis of the following selections.



Though the verse of Freneau is uneven in quality, it reveals native vigor and genuine talent. While in his early work he displayed, in common with other precursors of the romantic poets, the conventions of eighteenth-century verse, he had in him more than a streak of native independence. His poems have a freshness and actuality that indicate they must have been inspired on board ship or in the field, rather than in the library. His treatment of the macabre anticipates in power of the imagination the work of Poe. He romanticized the Indian, but with restraint when compared with his followers. He displayed a new strain of delicate feeling for nature, and his poems of the sea are new in kind, authentic, and spirited in tone. "A good hater," Freneau served his country not only during the Revolution, when he wrote his bitterest invectives, but thereafter in his vigorous comments on the times. Cruelty he opposed, and the humble and oppressed found in him, as in Paine, an impassioned friend. He was a man of many moods and arresting in most of them; he is in truth "America's earliest genuine poet."

## THE POWER OF FANCY

Written in 1770, and first published in 1786 in *Poems*. Later editions gave it the title "Ode to Fancy," and included only the first twenty and the last fourteen lines; the central portion was much changed and appeared separately as "Fanny's Ramble."

Wakeful, vagrant, restless thing,  
Ever wandering on the wing,  
Who thy wondrous source can find,  
FANCY, regent of the mind;  
A spark from Jove's resplendent throne, 5  
But thy nature all unknown.

THIS spark of bright, celestial flame,  
From Jove's seraphic altar came,  
And hence alone in man we trace,  
Resemblance to the immortal race. 10

Ah! what is all this mighty WHOLE,  
These suns and stars that round us roll!  
What are they all, where'er they shine,  
But *Fancies* of the Power Divine!  
What is this *globe*, these *lands*, and *seas*, 15  
And *heat*, and *cold*, and *flowers*, and *trees*,  
And *life*, and *death*, and *beast*, and *man*,  
And *time*,—that with the *sun* began—  
But thoughts on reason's scale combin'd,  
Ideas of the Almighty mind? 20

On the surface of the brain  
Night after night she walks unseen,  
Noble fabrics doth she raise  
In the woods or on the seas,  
On some high, steep, pointed rock, 25  
Where the billows loudly knock  
And the dreary tempests sweep  
Clouds along the uncivil deep.

Lo! she walks upon the moon,  
Listens to the chimy tune 30  
Of the bright, harmonious spheres,  
And the song of angels hears;  
Sees this earth a distant star,  
Pendant, floating in the air;  
Leads me to some lonely dome, 35  
Where Religion loves to come,

Where the bride of Jesus dwells,  
And the deep ton'd organ swells  
In notes with lofty anthems join'd,  
Notes that half distract the mind. 40

Now like lightning she descends  
To the prison of the fiends,  
Hears the rattling of their chains,  
Feels their never ceasing pains—  
But, O never may she tell 45  
Half the frightfulness of hell.

Now she views Arcadian rocks,  
Where the shepherds guard their flocks,  
And, while yet her wings she spreads, 50  
Sees chrystal streams and coral beds, 50  
Wanders to some desert deep,  
Or some dark, enchanted steep,  
By the full moonlight doth shew  
Forests of a dusky blue,  
Where, upon some mossy bed, 55  
Innocence reclines her head.

SWIFT, she stretches o'er the seas  
To the far off Hebrides,  
Canvas on the lofty mast  
Could not travel half so fast— 60  
Swifter than the eagle's flight  
Or instantaneous rays of light!  
Lo! contemplative she stands  
On Norwegia's rocky lands— 65  
Fickle Goddess, set me down 65  
Where the rugged winters frown  
Upon Orca's howling steep,  
Nodding o'er the northern deep,  
Where the winds tumultuous roar, 70  
Vext that *Ossian* sings no more. 70

Fancy, to that land repair,  
Sweetest *Ossian* slumbers there;  
Waft me far to southern isles  
Where the soften'd winter smiles, 75  
To Bermuda's orange shades, 75  
Or Demarara's lovely glades;  
Bear me o'er the sounding cape,  
Painting death in every shape,  
Where daring *Anson* spread the sail 80  
Shatter'd by the stormy gale— 80

33. star—"Milton's Paradise Lost, B. II, v. 1052." (Freneau's note) 67. Orca's—probably the Orkney Islands. 70. Ossian—a third-century bard of Gaelic legend. James Macpherson published in 1760-63 a cycle of poems, *Songs of Ossian*, supposedly from the ancient Gaelic. 76. Demarara's—a section and river of British Guiana. 79. Anson—Baron George Anson (1697-1762), British admiral, sent in 1740 to attack Spanish possessions in South America. In rounding Cape Horn, owing to the lateness of the season and consequent stormy weather, half his ships were destroyed, and his voyage continued to be particularly arduous.

Lo! she leads me wide and far,  
 Sense can never follow her—  
 Shape thy course o'er land and sea,  
 Help me to keep pace with thee,  
 Lead me to yon' chalky cliff,  
 Over rock and over reef,  
 Into Britain's fertile land,  
 Stretching far her proud command.  
 Look back and view, thro' many a year,  
 Caesar, Julius Caesar, there.

Now to Tempe's verdant wood,  
 Over the mid ocean flood  
 Lo! the islands of the sea  
 —Sappho, Lesbos mourns for thee:  
 Greece, arouse thy humbled head,  
 Where are all thy mighty dead,  
 Who states to endless ruin hurl'd  
 And carried vengeance through the world?—  
 Troy, thy vanish'd pomp resume,  
 Or, weeping at thy Hector's tomb,  
 Yet those faded scenes renew,  
 Whose memory is to *Homer* due.  
 Fancy, lead me wandering still  
 Up to Ida's cloud-topt hill;  
 Not a laurel there doth grow  
 But in vision thou shalt show,—  
 Every sprig on Virgil's tomb  
 Shall in livelier colours bloom,  
 And every triumph Rome has seen  
 Flourish on the years between.

Now she bears me far away  
 In the east to meet the day,  
 Leads me over Ganges' streams,  
 Mother of the morning beams—  
 O'er the ocean hath she ran,  
 Places me on *Tinian*;  
 Farther, farther in the east,  
 Till it almost meets the west,  
 Let us wandering both be lost  
 On Taitis sea-beat coast,  
 Bear me from that distant strand,  
 Over ocean, over land,  
 To California's golden shore—  
 Fancy, stop, and rove no more.

Now, tho' late, returning home, 125  
 Lead me to *Belinda's* tomb;  
 Let me glide as well as you  
 Through the shroud and coffin too,  
 And behold, a moment, there, 85  
 All that once was good and fair— 130  
 Who doth here so soundly sleep?  
 Shall we break this prison deep?—  
 Thunders cannot wake the maid,  
 Lightnings cannot pierce the shade, 90  
 And tho' wintry tempests roar, 135  
 Tempests shall disturb no more.  
 YET must those eyes in darkness stay,  
 That once were rivals to the day—?  
 Like heaven's bright lamp beneath the main 95  
 They are but set to rise again. 140  
 FANCY, thou the muses' pride,  
 In thy painted realms reside  
 Endless images of things,  
 Fluttering each on golden wings, 100  
 Ideal objects, such a store, 145  
 The universe could hold no more:  
 Fancy, to thy power I owe  
 Half my happiness below;  
 105 By thee Elysian groves were made, 149  
 Thine were the notes that Orpheus play'd;  
 By thee was Pluto charm'd so well  
 While rapture seiz'd the sons of hell—  
 Come, O come—perceiv'd by none,  
 110 You and I will walk alone.

## THE HOUSE OF NIGHT

### A VISION

115  
 120  
 "The House of Night" was composed at Santa Cruz in the West Indies, and first published in *The United States Magazine*, August, 1779, with the subtitle, "Six Hours Lodging with Death, A Vision." This edition of seventy-three stanzas was enlarged to the present one hundred and thirty-six in the 1786 edition, the text of which is given

90. *Caesar*—that is, look back through history to the landing of Julius Caesar on the British Isles (55-54 B.C.). 91. *Tempe's*—a valley between Mount Olympus and Mount Ossa in Thessaly, famed for its beauty. 94. *Sappho, Lesbos*—Sappho was a Greek lyric poetess of Lesbos, in the seventh century B.C. 116. *Tinian*—Tinos, an island in the Aegean, one of the Greek Cyclades. 120. *Taitis*—presumably the Islands of Tahiti in the South Seas, later the scene of Herman Melville's adventures among the cannibals, described in *Typee* (1846). 150. *Orpheus*—After the death of his wife, Eurydice, Orpheus descended to the lower world and so softened the heart of Pluto by his lyre-playing that Pluto permitted Eurydice to return to earth with her husband, provided he would not look back on the journey—a condition he did not fulfill.

here. In the use of the macabre and in the haunting music of its lines this poem was the most remarkable written up to this time in America, and forms an important link between the "Graveyard School" and Poe.

ADVERTISEMENT—This Poem is founded upon the authority of Scripture, inasmuch as these sacred books assert, that *the last enemy\* that shall be conquered is Death*. For the purposes of poetry he is here personified, and represented as on his dying bed. The scene is laid at a solitary palace (the time midnight) which, tho' before beautiful and joyous, is now become sad and gloomy, as being the abode and receptacle of Death. Its owner, an amiable, majestic youth, who had lately lost a beloved consort, nevertheless with a noble philosophical fortitude and humanity, entertains him in a friendly manner, and by employing Physicians, endeavours to restore him to health, altho' an enemy; convinced of the excellence and propriety of that divine precept, *If thine enemy † hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink*. He nevertheless, as if by a spirit of prophecy, informs this (fictitiously) wicked being of the certainty of his doom, and represents to him in a pathetic manner the vanity of his expectations, either of a reception into the abodes of the just, or continuing longer to make havock of mankind upon earth. The patient finding his end approaching, composes his epitaph, and orders it to be engraved on his tombstone, hinting to us thereby, that even Death and Distress have vanity; and would be remembered with honour after he is no more, altho' his whole life has been spent in deeds of devastation and murder. He dies at last in the utmost agonies of despair, after agreeing with an avaricious Undertaker to intomb his bones. This reflects upon the inhumanity of those men, who, not to mention an enemy, would scarcely cover a departed friend with a little dust, without certainty of reward for so doing. The circumstances of his funeral are then recited, and the visionary and fabulous

part of the poem disappears. It concludes with a few reflexions on the impropriety of a too great attachment to the present life, and incentives to such moral virtue as may assist in conducting us to a better.

## I

Trembling I write my dream, and recollect  
A fearful vision at the midnight hour;  
So late, Death o'er me spread his sable wings,  
Painted with fancies of malignant power!

## 2

Such was the dream the sage Chaldean saw  
Disclos'd to him that felt heav'n's vengeful  
rod, 6  
Such was the ghost, who through deep silence cry'd,  
*Shall mortal man—be juster than his God.*

## 3

Let others draw from smiling skies their  
theme,  
And tell of climes that boast unfading light,  
I draw a darker scene, replete with gloom, 11  
I sing the horrors of the *House of Night*.

## 4

Stranger, believe the truth experience tells,  
Poetic dreams are of a finer cast  
Than those which o'er the sober brain diffus'd, 15  
Are but a repetition of some action past.

## 5

Fancy, I own thy power—when sunk in  
sleep  
Thou play'st thy wild delusive part so well  
You lift me into immortality,  
Depict new heavens, or draw scenes of hell.

## 6

By some sad means, when Reason holds no  
sway, 21  
Lonely I rov'd at midnight o'er a plain  
Where murmuring streams and mingling  
rivers flow  
Far to their springs, or seek the sea again

\* *last enemy*—Cf. I Cor. 15: 26. † *If thine enemy*—Cf. Rom. 12: 20. 5. *Chaldean*—In Job 4: 17 Eliphaz the Temanite tells Job of a vision in which the spirit asks, "Shall mortal man be more just than God?"

7

Sweet vernal May! tho' then thy woods in  
bloom 25  
Flourish'd, yet nought of this could Fancy  
see,

No wild pinks bless'd the meads, no green  
the fields,  
And naked seem'd to stand each lifeless tree:

8

Dark was the sky, and not one friendly star  
Shone from the zenith or horizon, clear, 30  
Mist sate upon the woods, and darkness rode  
In her black chariot, with a wild career.

9

And from the woods the late resounding  
note  
Issued of the loquacious Whip-poor-will,  
Hoarse, howling dogs, and nightly roving  
wolves 35  
Clamor'd from far off cliffs invisible.

10

Rude, from the wide extended Chesapeake  
I heard the winds the dashing waves assail,  
And saw from far, by picturing fancy form'd,  
The black ship traveling through the noisy  
gale. 40

11

At last, by chance and guardian fancy led,  
I reach'd a noble dome, rais'd fair and high,  
And saw the light from upper windows  
flame,  
Presage of mirth and hospitality.

12

And by that light around the dome appear'd  
A mournful garden of autumnal hue, 46  
Its lately pleasing flowers all drooping stood  
Amidst high weeds that in rank plenty grew.

13

The Primrose there, the violet darkly blue,  
Daisies and fair Narcissus ceas'd to rise, 50

Gay spotted pinks their charming bloom  
withdrew,  
And Polyanthus quench'd its thousand dyes.

14

No pleasant fruit or blossom gaily smil'd,  
Nought but unhappy plants or trees were  
seen,  
The yew, the myrtle, and the church-yard  
elm, 55  
The cypress, with its melancholy green.

15

There cedars dark, the osier, and the pine,  
Shorn tamarisks, and weeping willows grew,  
The poplar tall, the lotos, and the lime,  
And pyracantha did her leaves renew. 60

16

The poppy there, companion to repose,  
Display'd her blossoms that began to fall,  
And here the purple amaranthus rose  
With mint strong-scented, for the funeral.

17

And here and there with laurel shrubs be-  
tween 65  
A tombstone lay, inscrib'd with strains of  
woe,  
And stanzas sad, throughout the dismal  
green,  
Lamented for the dead that slept below.

18

Peace to this awful dome!—when strait I  
heard  
The voice of men in a secluded room, 70  
Much did they talk of death, and much of  
life,  
Of coffins, shrouds, and horrors of a tomb.

19

Pathetic were their words, and well they  
aim'd  
To explain the mystic paths of providence,

34. *Whip-poor-will*—"A Bird peculiar to America, of a solitary nature, who never sings but in the night. Her note resembles the name given to her by the country people." (Freneau's note) 37. *Chesapeake*—Chesapeake Bay. 42. *dome*—Refers to the home of the "majestic youth" alluded to in the Advertisement. 52. *Polyanthus*—the fragrant narcissus. 55. *yew* . . .—stock elements of "graveyard poetry." 60. *pyracantha*—an evergreen thorny shrub, native of southern Europe, known as the evergreen thorn.

Learn'd were they all, but there remain'd  
 not I 75  
 To hear the upshot of their conference.

20

Meantime from an adjoining chamber came  
 Confused murmurings, half distinguish'd  
 sounds,  
 And as I nearer drew, disputes arose  
 Of surgery, and remedies for wounds. 80

21

Dull were their feuds, for they went on to  
 talk  
 Of *Anchylosis*, and the shoulder blade,  
*Os Femoris*, *Trochanters*—and whate'er  
 Has been discuss'd by Cheselden or Meade:

22

And often each, to prove his notion true 85  
 Brought proofs from Galen or Hippocrates—  
 But fancy led me hence—and left them so,  
 Firm at their points of hardy No and Yes.

23

Then up three winding stairs my feet were  
 brought  
 To a high chamber, hung with mourning  
 sad, 90  
 The unsnuff'd candles glar'd with visage  
 dim,  
 'Midst grief, in ecstasy of woe run mad.

24

A wide leaf'd table stood on either side,  
 Well fraught with phials, half their liquids  
 spent,  
 And from a couch, behind the curtain's veil,  
 I heard a hollow voice of loud lament. 96

25

Turning to view the object whence it came,  
 My frightened eyes a horrid form survey'd;

Fancy, I own thy power—Death on the  
 couch,  
 With fleshless limbs, at rueful length, was  
 laid. 100

26

And o'er his head flew jealousies and cares,  
 Ghosts, imps, and half the black Tartarian  
 crew,  
 Arch-angels damn'd, nor was their Prince  
 remote,  
 Borne on the vaporous wings of Stygian dew.

27

Around his bed, by the dull flambeaux'  
 glare, 105  
 I saw pale phantoms—Rage to madness vext,  
 Wan, wasting grief, and ever musing care,  
 Distressful pain, and poverty perplex.

28

Sad was his countenance, if we can call  
 That countenance, where only bones were  
 seen 110  
 And eyes sunk in their sockets, dark and low,  
 And teeth, that only show'd themselves to  
 grin.

29

Reft was his scull of hair, and no fresh  
 bloom  
 Of cheerful mirth sate on his visage hoar:  
 Sometimes he rais'd his head, while deep-  
 drawn groans 115  
 Were mixt with words that did his fate de-  
 plore.

30

Oft did he wish to see the daylight spring,  
 And often toward the window lean'd to hear,  
 Fore-runner of the scarlet-mantled morn,  
 The early note of wakeful Chanticleer. 120

31

Thus he—But at my hand a portly youth  
 Of comely countenance, began to tell,

82. *Anchylosis*—"Anchylosis—a morbid contraction of the joints. *Os Femoris*—the thigh bone. *Trochanters*—two processes in the upper part of the thigh bone, otherwise called *rotator major et minor*, in which the tendons of many muscles terminate." (Freneau's note) 84. *Cheselden*—William Cheselden (1688-1752), British anatomist, whose *Anatomy of the Human Body* (1713) was widely read; Richard *Mead* (1673-1754), the famous physician celebrated by Pope. Cf. *Imitations of Horace*, III, line 51, "I'll do what Mead and Cheselden advise." 86. *Galen or Hippocrates*—Greek physicians. Cf. note 20, p. 870. 102. *Tartarian*—Tartarus was the abode of the wicked below Hades. 103. *Prince*—Lucifer. 104. *Stygian*—from the River Styx, in Hades.

"That this was Death upon his dying bed,  
"Sullen, morose, and peevish to be well;

32

"Fixt is his doom—the miscreant reigns no  
more 125

"The tyrant of the dying or the dead;  
"This night concludes his all-consuming  
reign,

"Pour out, ye heav'ns, your vengeance on  
his head.

33

"But since, my friend (said he), chance leads  
you here, 129

"With me this night upon the sick attend,  
"You on this bed of death must watch, and I  
"Will not be distant from the fretful fiend.

34

"Before he made this lofty pile his home,  
"In undisturb'd repose I sweetly slept,  
"But when he came to this sequester'd  
dome 135  
" 'Twas then my troubles came, and then I  
wept:

35

"Twice three long nights, in this sad cham-  
ber, I,  
"As though a brother languish'd in despair,  
"Have 'tended faithful round his gloomy  
bed,  
"Have been content to breathe this loath-  
some air. 140

36

"A while relieve the languors that I feel,  
"Sleep's magic forces close my weary eyes;  
"Soft o'er my soul unwonted slumbers steal,  
"Aid the weak patient till you see me rise.

37

"But let no slumbers on your eye-lids fall,  
"That if he ask for powder or for pill 146  
"You may be ready at the word to start,  
"And still seem anxious to perform his  
will.

38

"The bleeding Saviour of a world undone  
"Bade thy compassion rise toward thy  
foe; 150

"Then, stranger, for the sake of Mary's son,  
"Thy tears of pity on this wretch bestow.

39

" 'Twas he that stole from my adoring arms  
" *Aspasia*, she the loveliest of her kind,  
" *Lucretia's* virtue, with a *Helen's* charms,  
"Charms of the face, and beauties of the  
mind. 156

40

"The blushy cheek, the lively, beaming eye,  
"The ruby lip, the flowing jetty hair,  
"The stature tall, the aspect so divine,  
"All beauty, you would think, had center'd  
there. 160

41

"Each future age her virtues shall extol,  
"Nor the just tribute to her worth refuse;  
"Fam'd, to the stars *URANIA* bids her rise,  
"Theme of the moral, and the tragic Muse.

42

"Sweet as the fragrance of the vernal morn,  
"Nipt in its bloom this faded flower I see;  
"The inspiring angel from that breast is  
gone, 167  
"And life's warm tide forever chill'd in thee!

43

"Such charms shall greet my longing soul  
no more,  
"Her lively eyes are clos'd in endless shade,  
"Torpid, she rests on yonder marble floor;  
"Approach, and see what havock *DEATH* has  
made. 172

44

"Yet, stranger, hold—her charms are so di-  
vine,  
"Such tints of life still on her visage glow,  
"That even in death this slumbering bride  
of mine 175

154. *Aspasia*—mistress of Pericles (died 429 B.C.), Athenian statesman, but the name is used here without specific reference. 155. *Lucretia's*—wife of Collatinus, who killed herself after having been wronged by Sextus Tarquinius, with the resultant expulsion of the Tarquins and the establishment of the Roman Republic. Cf. Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece*. 163. *Urania*—the muse of astronomy.

"May seize thy heart, and make thee  
wretched too.

45

"O shun the sight—forbid thy trembling  
hand

"From her pale face to raise the enshroud-  
ing lawn,—

"Death claims thy care, obey his stern com-  
mand,

179

"Trim the dull tapers, for I see no dawn!"

46

So said, at Death's left side I sate me down,  
The mourning youth toward his right re-  
clin'd;

Death in the middle lay, with all his groans,  
And much he toss'd and tumbled, sigh'd and  
pin'd.

47

But now this man of hell toward me  
turn'd,

185

And strait, in hideous tone, began to speak;  
Long held he sage discourse, but I forbore  
To answer him, much less his news to seek.

48

He talk'd of tomb-stones and of monuments,  
Of equinoctial climes and India shores, 190  
He talk'd of stars that shed their influence,  
Fevers and plagues, and all their noxious  
stores.

49

He mention'd, too, the guileful *calenture*,  
Tempting the sailor on the deep sea main  
That paints gay groves upon the ocean  
floor, 195  
Beckoning her victim to the faithless scene.

50

Much spoke he of the myrtle and the yew,  
Of ghosts that nightly walk the church-yard  
o'er,

Of storms that through the wint'ry ocean  
blow

And dash the well-mann'd galley to the  
shore. 200

193. *calenture*—"Calenture—an inflammatory fever, attended with a delirium, common in long voyages at sea, in which the diseased persons fancy the sea to be green fields and meadows, and, if they are not hindered, will leap overboard." (Freneau's note) 208. *Bohea*—black Chinese tea.

51

Of broad-mouth'd cannons, and the thunder-  
bolt,

Of sieges and convulsions, dearth and fire,  
Of poisonous weeds—but seem'd to sneer at  
these

Who by the laurel o'er him did aspire.

52

Then with a hollow voice thus went he  
on,

205

"Get up, and search, and bring, when found,  
to me,

"Some cordial, potion, or some pleasant  
draught,

"Sweet, slumb'rous poppy, or the mild  
Bohea.

53

"But hark, my pitying friend!—and, if you  
can,

"Deceive the grim physician at the door—  
"Bring half the mountain springs—ah!  
hither bring 211

"The cold rock water from the shady bower.

54

"For till this night such thirst did ne'er  
invade,

"A thirst provok'd by heav'n's avenging  
hand;

"Hence bear me, friends, to quaff, and quaff  
again 215

"The cool wave bubbling from the yellow  
sand.

55

"To these dark walls with stately step I  
came,

"Prepar'd your drugs and doses to defy;  
"Smit with the love of never dying fame,  
"I came, alas! to conquer—not to die!" 220

56

Glad, from his side I sprang, and fetch'd  
the draught,

Which down his greedy throat he quickly  
swills,



Then on a second errand sent me strait,  
To search in some dark corner for his pills.

57

Quoth he, "These pills have long com-  
pounded been, 225  
"Of dead men's bones and bitter roots, I  
throw;  
"But that I may to wonted health return,  
"Throughout my lank veins shall their sub-  
stance go."

58

So down they went— He rais'd his fainting  
head  
And oft in feeble tone essay'd to talk; 230  
Quoth he, "Since remedies have small avail,  
"Assist unhappy Death once more to walk."

59

Then slowly rising from his loathsome bed,  
On wasted legs the meagre monster stood,  
Gap'd wide, and foam'd, and hungry seem'd  
to ask, 235  
Tho' sick, an endless quantity of food.

60

Said he, "The sweet melodious flute prepare,  
"The anthem, and the organ's solemn sound,  
"Such as may strike my soul with ecstasy,  
"Such as may from yon' lofty wall re-  
bound. 240

61

"Sweet music can the fiercest pains assuage,  
"She bids the soul to heav'n's blest mansions  
rise,  
"She calms despair, controuls infernal rage  
"And deepest anguish, when it hears her,  
dies.

62

"And see, the mizzling, misty midnight  
reigns, 245  
"And no soft dew is on my eye-lids sent—!  
"Here, stranger, lend thy hand; assist me,  
pray,  
"To walk a circuit of no large extent"—

63

On my prest shoulders leaning, round he  
went,  
And could have made the boldest spectre  
flee, 250  
I led him up stairs, and I led him down,  
But not one moment's rest from pain got he.

64

Then with his dart, its cusp unpointed now,  
Thrice with main strength he smote the  
trembling floor;  
The roof resounded to the fearful blow, 255  
And *Cleon* started, doom'd to sleep no more.

65

When thus spoke Death, impatient of con-  
troul,  
"Quick, move, and bring from yonder black  
bureau  
"The sacred book that may preserve my  
soul  
"From long damnation, and eternal woe.

66

"And with it bring—for you may find them  
there, 261  
"The works of holy authors, dead and gone,  
"The sacred *tome* of moving Drelincourt,  
"Or what more solemn Sherlock mus'd  
upon:

67

"And read, my *Cleon*, what these sages  
say, 265  
"And what the sacred Penman hath declar'd,  
"That when the wicked leaves his odious  
way,  
"His sins shall vanish, and his soul be  
spar'd."

68

But he, unmindful of the vain command,  
Reason'd with Death, nor were his reason-  
ings few: 270  
Quoth he—"My Lord, what frenzy moves  
your brain,

256. *Cleon*—The "amiable youth" of the Advertisement. Cf. stanza 46, line 182. 263. *Drelincourt*—[Charles] *Drelincourt on Death*, a popular religious manual of the day, translated from the French. It reached a twenty-fourth edition by 1810. 264. *Sherlock*—William Sherlock (1641-1707), author of *Practical Discourse Concerning Death*, London, 1689. 267. *wicked*—Cf., for example, Acts 8: 22.

"Pray, what, my Lord, can Sherlock be to  
you,

69

"Or all the sage divines that ever wrote,  
"Grave Drelincourt, or heaven's unerring  
page;

"These point their arrows at your hostile  
breast,

275

"And raise new pains that time must ne'er  
assuage.

70

"And why should thus thy woe disturb my  
rest?

"Much of Theology I once did read,

"And there 'tis fixt, sure as my God is so,

"That Death shall perish, tho' a God should  
bleed.

280

71

"The martyr, doom'd the pangs of fire to  
feel,

"Lives but a moment in the sultry blast;

"The victim groans, and dies beneath the  
steel,

"But thy severer pains shall always last.

72

"O miscreant vile, thy age has made thee  
doat—

285

"If peace, if sacred peace were found for  
you,

"Hell would cry out, and all the damn'd  
arise

"And, more deserving, seek for pity too.

73

"Seek not for Paradise—'tis not for thee,

"Where high in heaven its sweetest blossoms  
blow,

290

"Nor even where, gliding to the Persian  
main

"Thy waves, Euphrates, through the garden  
flow!

74

"Bloody has been thy reign, O man of  
hell,

"Who sympathiz'd with no departing groan;

"Cruel wast thou, and hardly dost deserve

"To have *Hic Jacet* stamp't upon thy stone.

75

"He that could build his mansion o'er the  
tombs,

297

"Depending still on sickness and decay,

"May dwell unmov'd amidst these drowsier  
glooms,

"May laugh the dullest of these shades away.

76

"Remember how with unrelenting ire

301

"You tore the infant from the unwilling  
breast—

"ASPASIA fell, and CLEON must expire,

"Doom'd by the impartial God to endless  
rest:

77

"In vain with stars he deck'd yon' spangled  
skies,

305

"And bade the mind to heaven's bright re-  
gions soar,

"And brought so far to my admiring eyes

"A glimpse of glories that shall blaze no  
more!

78

"Even now to glut thy devilish wrath, I see

"From eastern realms a wasteful army rise:

"Why else those lights that tremble in the  
north?

311

"Why else yon' comet blazing through the  
skies?

79

"Rejoice, O fiend; Britannia's tyrant sends

"From German plains his myriads to our  
shore.

"The fierce Hibernian with the Briton  
join'd—

315

"Bring them, ye winds!—but waft them  
back no more.

80

"To you, alas! the fates in wrath deny

"The comforts to *our* parting moments due,

"And leave you here to languish and to die,

"Your crimes too many, and your tears too  
few.

320

81

"No cheering voice to thee shall cry, Re-  
pent!

"As once it echoed through the wilderness—

292. Euphrates—*Cf.* Gen. 2: 14. 296. *Hic Jacet*—"Here Lieth." 313. Britannia's  
tyrant—that is, George III. 314. The myriads are the Hessians. 321. Repent—*Cf.* Matt. 3: 1-2.

"No patron died for thee—damn'd, damn'd  
art thou  
"Like all the devils, nor one jot the less.

82

"A gloomy land, with sullen skies is thine,  
"Where never rose or amaranthus grow, 326  
"No daffodils, nor comely columbine,  
"No hyacinths nor asphodels for you.

83

"The barren trees that flourish on the shore  
"With leaves or fruit were never seen to  
bend, 330  
"O'er languid waves unblossom'd branches  
hang,  
"And every branch sustains some vagrant  
fiend.

84

"And now no more remains, but to prepare  
"To take possession of thy punishment,  
"That's thy inheritance, that thy domain,  
"A land of bitter woe, and loud lament. 336

85

"And oh that HE, who spread the universe,  
"Would cast one pitying glance on thee  
below;  
"Millions of years in torments thou might'st  
fry,  
"But thy eternity!—who can conceive its  
woe!" 340

86

He heard, and round with his black eye-  
balls gaz'd,  
Full of despair, and curs'd, and rav'd, and  
swore:

"And since this is my doom," said he, "call  
up  
"Your wood-mechanics to my chamber door:

87

"Blame not on me the ravage to be made;  
"Proclaim,—even Death abhors such woe to  
see; 346  
"I'll quit the world, while decently I can,  
"And leave the work to George my deputy."

88

Up rush'd a band, with compasses and scales  
To measure his slim carcase, long and lean—

"Be sure," said he, "to frame my coffin  
strong, 351  
"You, master workman, and your men, I  
mean:

89

"For if the Devil, so late my trusty friend,  
"Should get one hint where I am laid, from  
you,  
"Not with my soul content, he'd seek to  
find 355  
"That mouldering mass of bones, my body,  
tool!

90

"Of hardest ebon let the plank be found,  
"With clamps and ponderous bars secur'd  
around,  
"That if the box by Satan should be storm'd,  
"It may be able for resistance found." 360

91

"Yes," said the master workman, "nobly  
Death,  
"Your coffin shall be strong—that leave to  
me—  
"But who shall these your funeral dues dis-  
charge?  
"Nor friends nor pence you have, that I can  
see."

92

To this said Death—"You might have ask'd  
me, too, 365  
"Base caitiff, who are my executors,  
"Where my estate, and who the men that  
shall  
"Partake my substance, and be call'd my  
heirs.

93

"Know, then, that hell is my inheritance,  
"The devil himself my funeral dues must  
pay— 370  
"Go—since you must be paid—go, ask of  
him,  
"For he has gold, as fabling poets say."

94

Strait they retir'd—when thus he gave me  
charge,  
Pointing from the light window to the west,  
"Go three miles o'er the plain, and you shall  
see 375  
"A burying-yard of sinners dead, unblest.

95

"Amid the graves a spiry building stands  
 "Whose solemn knell resounding through  
 the gloom  
 "Shall call thee o'er the circumjacent lands  
 "To the dull mansion destin'd for my tomb.

96

"There, since 'tis dark, I'll plant a glimmer-  
 ing light 381  
 "Just snatch'd from hell, by whose reflected  
 beams  
 "Thou shalt behold a tomb-stone, full eight  
 feet,  
 "Fast by a grave, replete with ghosts and  
 dreams.

97

"And on that stone engrave this epitaph,  
 "Since Death, it seems, must die like mortal  
 men; 386  
 "Yes—on that stone engrave this epitaph,  
 "Though all hell's furies aim to snatch the  
 pen.

98

"*Death in this tomb his weary bones hath  
 laid,* 389  
 "*Sick of dominion o'er the human kind—  
 "Behold what devastations he hath made,  
 "Survey the millions by his arm confin'd.*

99

"*Six thousand years has sovereign sway been  
 mine,  
 "None, but myself, can real glory claim;  
 "Great Regent of the world I reign'd alone,  
 "And princes trembled when my mandate  
 came.* 396

100

"*Vast and unmatch'd throughout the world,  
 my fame  
 "Takes place of gods, and asks no mortal  
 date—  
 "No; by myself, and by the heavens, I swear,  
 "Not Alexander's name is half so great.* 400

101

"*Nor swords nor darts my prowess could  
 withstand,*

"*All quit their arms, and bow'd to my  
 decree,  
 "Even mighty JULIUS died beneath my hand,  
 "For slaves and Caesars were the same to me!*

102

"*Traveller, wouldst thou his noblest trophies  
 seek,* 405  
 "*Search in no narrow spot obscure for those;  
 "The sea profound, the surface of all land  
 "Is moulded with the myriads of his foes."*

103

Scarce had he spoke, when on the lofty  
 dome  
 Rush'd from the clouds a hoarse resounding  
 blast— 410  
 Round the four eaves so loud and sad it  
 play'd  
 As though all music were to breathe its last.

104

Warm was the gale, and such as travelers  
 say  
 Sport with the winds on Zaara's barren  
 waste;  
 Black was the sky, a mourning carpet  
 spread, 415  
 Its azure blotted, and its stars o'ercast!

105

Lights in the air like burning stars were  
 hurl'd,  
 Dogs howl'd, heaven mutter'd, and the tem-  
 pest blew,  
 The red half-moon peeped from behind a  
 cloud  
 As if in dread the amazing scene to  
 view. 420

106

The mournful trees that in the garden stood  
 Bent to the tempest as it rush'd along,  
 The elm, the myrtle, and the cypress sad  
 More melancholy tun'd its bellowing song.

107

No more that elm its noble branches  
 spread, 425

393. Six thousand—The reign of death, according to Jewish chronology, began four thousand years before the Christian era. 398. mortal date—Death finds it hard to imagine he is not immortal. 414. Zaara's—Sahara's.

The yew, the cypress, or the myrtle tree,  
Rent from the roots the tempest tore them  
down,  
And all the grove in wild confusion lay.

108

Yet, mindful of his dread command, I part  
Glad from the magic dome—nor found relief;  
Damps from the dead hung heavier round  
my heart,  
While sad remembrance rous'd her stores of  
grief.

109

O'er a dark field I held my dubious way  
Where Jack-a-lantern walk'd his lonely  
round,  
Beneath my feet substantial darkness lay, 435  
And screams were heard from the distem-  
per'd ground.

110

Nor look'd I back, till to a far off wood,  
Trembling with fear, my weary feet had  
sped—  
Dark was the night, but at the enchanted  
dome  
I saw the infernal windows flaming red. 440

111

And from within the howls of Death I  
heard,  
Cursing the dismal night that gave him  
birth,  
Damning his ancient sire, and mother sin,  
Who at the gates of hell, accursed, brought  
him forth.

112

(For fancy gave to my enraptur'd soul 445  
An eagle's eye, with keenest glance to see,  
And bade those distant sounds distinctly roll,  
Which, waking, never had affected me.)

113

Oft his pale breast with cruel hand he smote,  
And tearing from his limbs a winding  
sheet, 450  
Roar'd to the black skies, while the woods  
around,  
As wicked as himself, his words repeat.

114

Thrice tow'rd the skies his meagre arms he  
rear'd,  
Invok'd all hell, and thunders on his head,  
Bid light'nings fly, earth yawn, and tem-  
pests roar, 455  
And the sea wrap him in its oozy bed.

115

"My life for one cool draught!—O, fetch  
your springs,  
"Can one unfeeling to my woes be found!  
"No friendly visage comes to my relief,  
"But ghosts impend, and spectres hover  
round. 460

116

"Though humbled now, dishearten'd and dis-  
trest,  
"Yet, when admitted to the peaceful ground,  
"With heroes, kings, and conquerors I shall  
rest,  
"Shall sleep as safely, and perhaps as sound."

117

Dim burnt the lamp, and now the phantom  
Death 465  
Gave his last groans in horror and despair—  
"All hell demands me hence,"—he said, and  
threw  
The red lamp hissing through the midnight  
air.

118

Trembling, across the plain my course I held,  
And found the grave-yard, loitering through  
the gloom, 470  
And, in the midst, a hell-red, wandering  
light,  
Walking in fiery circles round the tomb.

119

Among the graves a spiry building stood,  
Whose tolling bell, resounding through the  
shade,  
Sung doleful ditties to the adjacent  
wood, 475  
And many a dismal drowsy thing it said.

120

This fabric tall, with towers and chancels  
grac'd,

434. *Jack-a-lantern*—Freneau thinks of the will-o'-the-wisp as a lantern held by a watch-  
man on his nightly round in the land of death. 443. *sire*—*Cf. Paradise Lost*, Bk. II, lines 746 ff.

Was rais'd by sinners' hands, in ages fled;  
The roof they painted, and the beams they  
  brac'd,  
And texts from scripture o'er the walls they  
  spread: 480

121

But wicked were their hearts, for they re-  
fus'd  
To aid the helpless orphan, when distress,  
The shivering, naked stranger they misus'd,  
And banish'd from their doors the starving  
  guest.

122

By laws protected, cruel and profane, 485  
The poor man's ox these monsters drove  
  away;—  
And left Distress to attend her infant train,  
No friend to comfort, and no bread to stay.

123

But heaven look'd on with keen, resentful  
  eye,  
And doom'd them to perdition and the  
  grave, 490  
That as they felt not for the wretch distress,  
So heaven no pity on their souls would have.

124

In pride they rais'd this building tall and  
  fair,  
Their hearts were on perpetual mischief  
  bent,  
With pride they preach'd, and pride was in  
  their prayer, 495  
With pride they were deceiv'd, and so to hell  
  they went.

125

At distance far approaching to the tomb,  
By lamps and lanthorns guided through the  
  shade,  
A coal-black chariot hurried through the  
  gloom,  
Spectres attending, in black weeds ar-  
  ray'd. 500

126

Whose woeful forms yet chill my soul with  
  dread,  
Each wore a vest in Stygian chambers wove,

Death's kindred all—Death's horses they  
  bestrode,  
And gallop'd fiercely, as the chariot drove.

127

Each horrid face a grizly mask con-  
ceal'd, 505  
Their busy eyes shot terror to my soul  
As now and then, by the pale lanthorn's  
  glare,  
I saw them for their parted friend condole.

128

Before the hearse Death's chaplain seem'd  
  to go,  
Who strove to comfort, what he could, the  
  dead; 510  
Talk'd much of Satan, and the land of  
  woe,  
And many a chapter from the scriptures  
  read.

129

At last he rais'd the swelling anthem high,  
In dismal numbers seem'd he to complain;  
The captive tribes that by Euphrates  
  wept, 515  
Their song was jovial to this dreary strain.

130

That done, they plac'd the carcase in the  
  tomb,  
To dust and dull oblivion now resign'd,  
Then turn'd the chariot tow'rd the House  
  of Night,  
Which soon flew off, and left no trace be-  
  hind. 520

131

But as I stoop'd to write the appointed verse,  
Swifter than thought the airy scene decay'd;  
Blushing the morn arose, and from the east  
With her gay streams of light dispell'd the  
  shade.

132

What is this Death, ye deep read sophists,  
  say?— 525  
Death is no more than one unceasing change;  
New forms arise, while other forms decay,  
Yet all is Life throughout creation's range.

486. ox—*Cf.* Job 24:3. 500. black weeds—mourning garments. 502. vest—vestment.  
515. captive tribes—*Cf.* Ps. 137. 525. sophists—here in the sense of wise men.

133

The towering Alps, the haughty Apennine,  
The Andes, wrapt in everlasting snow, 530  
The Apalachian and the Ararat  
Sooner or later must to ruin go.

134

Hills sink to plains, and man returns to dust,  
That dust supports a reptile or a flower;  
Each changeful atom by some other  
nurs'd 535  
Takes some new form, to perish in an hour.

135

Too nearly join'd to sickness, toils, and  
pains,  
(Perhaps for former crimes imprison'd here)  
True to itself the immortal soul remains,  
And seeks new mansions in the starry  
sphere. 540

136

When Nature bids thee from the world re-  
tire,  
With joy thy lodging leave, a fated guest;  
In Paradise, the land of thy desire,  
Existing always, always to be blest.

### ON THE MEMORABLE VICTORY,

OBTAINED BY THE GALLANT CAPTAIN PAUL  
JONES, OF *Le Bon Homme Richard*, (OR  
FATHER RICHARD) OVER THE *Seraphis*, OF  
44 GUNS, UNDER THE COMMAND OF CAP-  
TAIN PEARSON

This poem was contributed to the *Free-  
man's Journal*, August 8, 1781. The victory  
here celebrated occurred off Hull, England,  
September 23, 1779, and was the first impor-  
tant victory for the American navy. Compare  
Cooper's *The Pilot* (1823). The text is that  
of the 1786 edition. The poem is clearer if  
one consults Chapter x of C. T. Brady, *Com-  
modore Paul Jones*, Appleton, 1900.

O'er the rough main with flowing sheet  
The guardian of a numerous fleet,  
*Seraphis* from the Baltic came;  
A ship of less tremendous force  
Sailed by her side the self-same course, 5  
*Countess of Scarborough* was her name.

And now their native coasts appear,  
Britannia's hills their summits rear  
Above the German main:  
Fond to suppose their dangers o'er, 10  
They southward coast along the shore,  
Thy waters, gentle Thames, to gain.

Full forty guns *Seraphis* bore,  
And *Scarborough's* Countess twenty-four,  
Manned with Old England's boldest  
tars— 15  
What flag that rides the Gallic seas  
Shall dare attack such piles as these,  
Designed for tumults and for wars!

Now from the top-mast's giddy heights  
A seaman cried—"Four sail in sight 20  
"Approach with favouring gales;"  
Pearson, resolved to save the fleet,  
Stood off to sea, these ships to meet,  
And closely braced his shivering sails.

With him advanc'd the Countess bold, 25  
Like a black tar in wars grown old:  
And now these floating piles drew nigh;  
But, muse, unfold, what chief of fame  
In the other warlike squadron came,  
Whose standards at his mast head fly. 30

'Twas Jones, brave JONES, to battle led  
As bold a crew as ever bled  
Upon the sky-surrounded main;  
The standards of the western world  
Were to the willing winds unfurled, 35  
Denying Britain's tyrant reign.

The *Good-Man-Richard* led the line;  
The *Alliance* next: with these combine  
The Gallic ship they *Pallas* call:  
The *Vengeance*, armed with sword and  
flame, 40

3. *Baltic*—The British war-vessels were convoying a merchant fleet of forty sail from the Baltic Ocean. 9. the *German main*—the North Sea. 16. *Gallic seas*—seas surrounding France. 22. *Pearson*—Sir Richard Pearson (1731-1806), Commander of the *Serapis*. 30. *Whose*—The construction is confused, but the sense is clear if one substitutes "what."

These to attack the Britons came—  
But *two* accomplished all.

His main-mast totters—down it falls—  
O'erwhelming half below.

Now Phoebus sought his pearly bed:  
But who can tell the scenes of dread,  
The horrors of that fatal night! 45  
Close up these floating castles came;  
The Good Man Richard bursts in flame;  
Seraphis trembled at the sight.

Pearson as yet disdained to yield, 85  
But scarce he secret fears concealed,  
And thus was heard to cry—  
"With hell, not mortals, I contend;  
"What art thou—human or a fiend,  
"That dost my force defy? 90

She felt the fury of *her* ball:  
Down, prostrate down, the Britons fall; 50  
The decks were strewn with slain:  
Jones to the foe his vessel lashed;  
And, while the black artillery flashed,  
Loud thunders shook the main.

"Return, my lads, the fight renew!"  
So called bold Pearson to his crew;  
But called, alas! in vain;  
Some on the decks lay maimed and dead;  
Some to their deep recesses fled, 95  
And more were shrouded in the main.

Alas! that mortals should employ 55  
Such murdering engines, to destroy  
That frame by heaven so nicely joined;  
Alas! that e'er the god decreed  
That brother should by brother bleed,  
And pour'd such madness in the mind. 60

Distressed, forsaken, and alone,  
He hauled his tattered standard down,  
And yielded to his gallant foe;  
Bold *Pallas* soon the *Countess* took,— 100  
Thus both their haughty colours struck,  
Confessing what the brave can do.

But thou, brave Jones, no blame shalt bear;  
The rights of men demand thy care:  
For *these* you dare the greedy waves—  
No tyrant, on destruction bent  
Has planned thy conquests—thou art sent 65  
To humble tyrants and their slaves.

But, Jones, too dearly didst thou buy  
These ships possess so gloriously,  
Too many deaths disgraced the fray: 105  
Thy barque that bore the conquering flame,  
That the proud Briton overcame,  
Even she forsook thee on thy way;

See!—dread Seraphis flames again—  
And art thou, *Jones*, among the slain,  
And sunk to Neptune's caves below—  
He lives—though crowds around him fall, 70  
Still he, unhurt, survives them all;  
Almost alone he fights the foe.

For when the morn began to shine,  
Fatal to her, the ocean brine 110  
Poured through each spacious wound;  
Quick in the deep she disappeared,  
But Jones to friendly *Belgia* steered,  
With conquest and with glory crowned.

And can thy ship these strokes sustain?  
Behold thy brave companions slain,  
All clasped in ocean's dark embrace. 75  
"STRIKE, OR BE SUNK!"—the Briton cries—  
"SINK, IF YOU CAN!"—the chief replies,  
Fierce lightnings blazing in his face.

Go on, great man, to scourge the foe, 115  
And bid the haughty Britons know  
They to our *Thirteen Stars* shall bend;  
The *Stars* that clad in dark attire,  
Long glimmered with a feeble fire,  
But radiant now ascend. 120

Then to the side three guns he drew,  
(Almost deserted by his crew) 80  
And charged them deep with woe:  
By *Pearson's* flash he aim'd hot balls;

Bend to the Stars that flaming rise  
On western worlds, more brilliant skies.  
Fair Freedom's reign restored.  
So when the Magi, come from far,

42. *two*—The *Bon-Homme Richard* and the *Pallas*. The *Vengeance* took no part in the action; the conduct of the *Alliance*, which fired into Jones's ships, has never been satisfactorily explained.  
43. *Phoebus sought* . . . —The sun set in the sea. 57. *frame*—human frame. 124. *Magi*—*Cf.* Matt. 1-2; 8-11.



Beheld the God-attending Star, 125  
They trembled and adored.

### TO THE MEMORY

OF THE BRAVE AMERICANS, UNDER GENERAL  
GREENE, IN SOUTH CAROLINA, WHO FELL IN  
THE ACTION OF SEPTEMBER 8, 1781.

This poem was written in 1781 and published in the 1795 edition of the *Poems*. General Nathanael Greene, though suffering defeat at Eutaw Springs, with a loss of 700 men, harassed Cornwallis in the South to such an extent as to hasten the end of the conflict.

At Eutaw springs the valiant died:  
Their limbs with dust are cover'd o'er—  
Weep on, ye springs, your tearful tide;  
How many heroes are no more!

If in this wreck of ruin, they 5  
Can yet be thought to claim a tear,  
O smite thy gentle breast, and say  
The friends of freedom slumber here!

Thou, who shalt trace this bloody plain, 10  
If goodness rules thy generous breast,  
Sigh for the wasted rural reign;  
Sigh for the shepherds, sunk to rest!

Stranger, their humble graves adorn;  
You too may fall, and ask a tear:  
'Tis not the beauty of the morn 15  
That proves the evening shall be clear—

They saw their injur'd country's woe;  
The flaming town, the wasted field;  
Then rush'd to meet the insulting foe;  
They took the spear—but left the shield, 20

Led by thy conquering genius, GREENE,  
The Britons they compell'd to fly:  
None distant view'd the fatal plain,  
None griev'd, in such a cause, to die—

But, like the Parthian, fam'd of old, 25  
Who, flying, still their arrows threw;  
These routed Britons, full as bold,  
Retreated, and retreating slew.

Now rest in peace, our patriot band;  
Though far from Nature's limits thrown, 30  
We trust, they find a happier land,  
A brighter sun-shine of their own.

### ON THE EMIGRATION TO AMERICA

AND PEOPLING THE WESTERN COUNTRY

"On the Emigration to America" was written in 1784 and first published in Bailey's *Pocket Almanac* for 1785. Later reprints are almost without change.

To western woods, and lonely plains,  
*Palemon* from the crowd departs,  
Where Nature's wildest genius reigns, 5  
To tame the soil, and plant the arts—  
What wonders there shall freedom show, 5  
What mighty STATES successive grow!

From Europe's proud, despotic shores  
Hither the stranger takes his way,  
And in our new found world explores  
A happier soil, a milder sway, 10  
Where no proud despot holds him down,  
No slaves insult him with a crown.

What charming scenes attract the eye,  
On wild Ohio's savage stream!  
There Nature reigns, whose works outvie 15  
The boldest pattern art can frame;  
There ages past have rolled away,  
And forests bloomed but to decay.

From these fair plains, these rural seats,  
So long concealed, so lately known, 20  
The unsocial Indian far retreats,  
To make some other clime his own,  
When other streams, less pleasing flow,  
And darker forests round him grow.

25. the Parthian—The Parthian horsemen were accustomed to lure their enemies forward by a real or pretended flight, and then, wheeling rapidly, discharge volleys of arrows against them before they could rally. 2. *Palemon*—a minor Roman deity invoked to forestall shipwreck. The name here is a euphemism for Jack Tar

Great Sire of floods! whose varied wave 25  
Through climes and countries takes its way,  
To whom creating Nature gave  
Ten thousand streams to swell thy sway!  
No longer shall *they* useless prove,  
Nor idly through the forests rove; 30

Nor longer shall your princely flood  
From distant lakes be swelled in vain,  
Nor longer through a darksome wood  
Advance, unnoticed, to the main,  
Far other ends, the heavens decree— 35  
And commerce plans new freights for thee.

While virtue warms the generous breast,  
There heaven-born freedom shall reside,  
Nor shall the voice of war molest,  
Nor Europe's all-aspiring pride— 40  
There Reason shall new laws devise,  
And order from confusion rise.

Forsaking kings and regal state,  
With all their pomp and fancied bliss,  
The traveller owns, convinced though  
late, 45  
No realm so free, so blest as this—  
The east is half to slaves consigned,  
Where kings and priests enchain the mind.

O come the time, and haste the day,  
When man shall man no longer crush, 50  
When Reason shall enforce her sway,  
Nor these fair regions raise our blush,  
Where still the *African* complains,  
And mourns his yet unbroken chains.

Far brighter scenes a future age, 55  
The muse predicts, these States will hail,  
Whose genius may the world engage,  
Whose deeds may over death prevail,  
And happier systems bring to view,  
Than all the eastern sages knew. 60

### THE HURRICANE

This was written in 1784, published in  
the *Freeman's Journal*, April 13, 1785, as

"Verses, made at Sea, in a Heavy Gale," and  
reprinted without change in the 1786 edi-  
tion of the *Poems*.

Happy the man who, safe on shore,  
Now trims, at home, his evening fire;  
Unmov'd, he hears the tempests roar,  
That on the tufted groves expire:  
Alas! on us they doubly fall, 5  
Our feeble barque must bear them all.

Now to their haunts the birds retreat,  
The squirrel seeks his hollow tree,  
Wolves in their shaded caverns meet,  
All, all are blest but wretched we— 10  
Foredoomed a stranger to repose,  
No rest the unsettled ocean knows.

While o'er the dark abyss we roam,  
Perhaps, with last departing gleam,  
We saw the sun descend in gloom, 15  
No more to see his morning beam;  
But buried low, by far too deep,  
On coral beds, unpitied, sleep!

But what a strange, uncoasted strand  
Is that, where fate permits no day— 20  
No charts have we to mark that land,  
No compass to direct that way—  
What Pilot shall explore that realm,  
What new Columbus take the helm!

While death and darkness both surround, 25  
And tempests rage with lawless power,  
Of friendship's voice I hear no sound,  
No comfort in this dreadful hour—  
What friendship can in tempests be,  
What comfort on this raging sea? 30

The barque, accustomed to obey,  
No more the trembling pilots guide:  
Alone she gropes her trackless way,  
While mountains burst on either side—  
Thus, skill and science both must fall; 35  
And ruin is the lot of all.

25. Sire—"Mississippi." (Freneau's note) 44. Reads in 1786 edition "A debt that reason deems amiss." 48. Reads in 1786 edition "And half to slavery more refin'd." 13. abyss—"Near the east end of Jamaica, July 30, 1784." (Freneau's note)

## ON RETIREMENT

by Hezekiah Salem

Printed in the 1786 edition as "Retirement," and in 1795 as "The Wish of Diogenes." Hezekiah Salem was frequently used by Freneau as a pen name.

A hermit's house beside a stream  
With forests planted round,  
Whatever it to you may seem  
More real happiness I deem  
Than if I were a monarch crown'd. 5

A cottage I could call my own  
Remote from domes of care;  
A little garden, wall'd with stone,  
The wall with ivy overgrown,  
A limpid fountain near, 10

Would more substantial joys afford,  
More real bliss impart  
Than all the wealth that misers hoard,  
Than vanquished worlds, or worlds restored—  
Mere cankers of the heart! 15

Vain foolish man! how vast thy pride,  
How little can thy wants supply!—  
'Tis surely wrong to grasp so wide—  
We act as if we only had  
To triumph—not to die! 20

## THE WILD HONEY SUCKLE

Probably written in Charleston, South Carolina, in July, 1786; first published in the *Freeman's Journal*, August 2, 1786, and re-published in the edition of 1788 and later with practically no change. The flower in question, according to Pattee, is probably the *Rhododendron viscosum*.

Fair flower, that dost so comely grow,  
Hid in this silent, dull retreat,  
Untouched thy honied blossoms blow,

Unseen thy little branches greet:  
No roving foot shall crush thee here, 5  
No busy hand provoke a tear.

By Nature's self in white arrayed,  
She bade thee shun the vulgar eye,  
And planted here the guardian shade,  
And sent soft waters murmuring by; 10  
Thus quietly thy summer goes,  
Thy days declining to repose.

Smit with those charms, that must decay,  
I grieve to see your future doom;  
They died—nor were those flowers more  
gay, 15  
The flowers that did in Eden bloom;  
Unpitied frosts, and Autumn's power  
Shall leave no vestige of this flower.

From morning suns and evening dew  
At first thy little being came: 20  
If nothing once, you nothing lose,  
For when you die you are the same;  
The space between, is but an hour,  
The frail duration of a flower.

THE INDIAN BURYING  
GROUND

Published in 1788. This poem is the earliest to romanticize the Indian as the child of nature.

In spite of all the learned have said,  
I still my old opinion keep;  
The *posture*, that *we* give the dead,  
Points out the soul's eternal sleep.

Not so the ancients of these lands— 5  
The Indian, when from life released,  
Again is seated with his friends,  
And shares again the joyous feast.\*

His imaged birds, and painted bowl,  
And venison, for a journey dressed, 10  
Bespeak the nature of the soul,  
ACTIVITY, that knows no rest.

\* *feast*—"The North American Indians bury their dead in a sitting posture; decorating the corpse with wampum, the images of birds, quadrupeds, &c: And (if that of a warrior) with bows, arrows, tomahawks and other military weapons." (Freneau's note)

His bow, for action ready bent,  
And arrows, with a head of stone,  
Can only mean that life is spent,  
And not the old ideas gone.

15

Thou, stranger, that shalt come this way,  
No fraud upon the dead commit—  
Observe the swelling turf, and say  
They do not *lie*, but here they *sit*.

20

Here still a lofty rock remains,  
On which the curious eye may trace  
(Now wasted, half, by wearing rains)  
The fancies of a ruder race.

Here still an aged elm aspires,  
Beneath whose far-projecting shade  
(And which the shepherd still admires)  
The children of the forest played!

25

There oft a restless Indian queen  
(Pale *Shebah*, with her braided hair)  
And many a barbarous form is seen  
To chide the man that lingers there.

30

By midnight moons, o'er moistening dews,  
In habit for the chase arrayed,  
The hunter still the deer pursues,  
The hunter and the deer, a shade!

35

And long shall timorous fancy see  
The painted chief, and pointed spear,  
And Reason's self shall bow the knee  
To shadows and delusions here.

40

The chiefs that bow to Capet's reign,  
In mourning, now, their weeds display;  
But we, that scorn a monarch's chain,  
Combine to celebrate the *DAY*  
Of Freedom's birth that put the seal,  
And laid in dust the proud Bastille.

5

To Gallia's rich and splendid crown,  
This mighty *Day* gave such a blow  
As time's recording hand shall own  
No former *age* had power to do:  
No single gem some Brutus stole,  
But instant ruin seiz'd the whole.

10

Now tyrants rise, once more to bind  
In royal chains a nation freed—  
Vain hope! for they, to death consign'd,  
Shall soon, like perjur'd Louis, bleed:  
O'er every king, o'er every queen  
Fate hangs the sword, and guillotine.

15

"Plung'd in a gulf of deep distress  
France turns her back—(so traitors say)  
Kings, priests, and nobles, round her press,  
Resolv'd to seize their destin'd prey:  
Thus Europe swears (in arms combin'd)  
*To Poland's doom is France consign'd.*"

20

Yet those, who now are thought so low  
From conquests that were *basely* gain'd,  
Shall rise tremendous from the blow  
And free two *WORLDS*, that still are chain'd,  
Restrict the Briton to his isle,  
And Freedom plant in every soil.

25

30

### ON THE ANNIVERSARY

OF THE STORMING OF THE BASTILLE, AT PARIS.  
JULY 14TH, 1789

First printed in the *National Gazette*, July  
17, 1793, and republished in the edition of  
1795, but omitted from the edition of 1809.

Ye sons of this degenerate clime,  
Haste, arm the barque, expand the sail;  
Assist to speed that golden time  
When Freedom rules, and monarchs fail;  
All left to France—*new powers* may  
join,  
And help to crush the cause divine.

35

1. *Capet's reign*—Louis XVI, ruler of France from 1774 to 1793. 6. *Bastille*—the famous prison in Paris, built in 1369 and destroyed by the popular uprising here celebrated. 11. *Brutus*—a republican leader like Marcus Junius Brutus (85-42 B.C.), one of Caesar's assassins. 13. *tyrants*—Austria, Prussia, and exiled French nobles had united in a hostile demonstration intended to restore the French monarchy. 16. *perjur'd Louis*—Refers to Louis's supposed violation of his oath to support the Constitution of 1791. He was executed on the guillotine Jan. 21, 1793. 24. *Poland's doom*—Poland had been thrice partitioned; in Freneau's view, the Allies opposed to France (1793) now intended to disregard popular opinion and restore the Bourbons.

Ah! while I write, dear France ALLIED,  
 My ardent wish I scarce restrain,  
 To throw these Sybil leaves aside,  
 And fly to join you on the main:  
     Unfurl the topsail for the chace  
     And help to crush the tyrant race!

The world at last will join  
 To aid thy grand design,  
 Dear Liberty!  
 40 To Russia's frozen lands  
 The generous flame expands:  
 On Afric's burning sands  
 Shall man be free!  
 35

## ODE

This ode was sung to the tune of "God Save the King" at the Civic Feast given to Citizen Genêt in Philadelphia, June 1, 1793. It was published in the 1795 edition of Freneau's *Poems*.

God save the Rights of Man!  
 Give us a heart to scan  
 Blessings so dear:  
 Let them be spread around  
 Wherever man is found,  
 And with the welcome sound  
 Ravish his ear.

If e'er her cause require!  
 Should tyrants e'er aspire  
 To aim their stroke,  
 45 May no proud despot daunt—  
 Should he his standard plant,  
 5 Freedom will never want  
 Her hearts of oak!

Let us with France agree,  
 And bid the world be free,  
 While tyrants fall!  
 10 Let the rude savage host  
 Of their vast numbers boast—  
 Freedom's almighty trust  
 Laughs at them all!

THE REPUBLICAN GENIUS  
OF EUROPE

Published in the *Jersey Chronicle*, May 23, 1795.

Though hosts of slaves conspire  
 To quench fair Gallia's fire,  
 Still shall they fail:  
 Though traitors round her rise,  
 Leagu'd with her enemies,  
 To war each patriot flies,  
 And will prevail.

15 Emperors and kings! in vain you strive  
 Your torments to conceal—  
 The age is come that shakes your thrones,  
 Tramples in dust despotic crowns,  
 And bids the sceptre fail.  
 5

No more is valour's flame  
 Devoted to a name,  
 Taught to adore—  
 Soldiers of LIBERTY  
 20 Disdain to bow the knee,  
 But teach EQUALITY  
 To every shore.

20 In western worlds the flame began:  
 From thence to France it flew—  
 Through Europe, now, it takes its way,  
 Beams an insufferable day,  
 And lays all tyrants low.  
 10

25 Genius of France! pursue the chace  
 Till Reason's laws restore  
 Man to be Man, in every clime;—

37. *Allied*—Existing treaties between France and the United States bound each to support the other. The American Government avoided the issue by arguing that a treaty signed with the Bourbons did not bind the United States to the French Republic. 39. *Sybil leaves*—prophetic leaves (from Roman mythology). 16. *Gallia's fire*—the French Revolution. 49. *hearts of oak*—This title from one of David Garrick's popular songs was frequently applied to Revolutionary heroes.

That Being, active, great, sublime  
Debas'd in dust no more. 15

In dreadful pomp he takes his way  
O'er ruin'd crowns, demolish'd thrones—  
Pale tyrants shrink before his blaze—  
Round him terrific lightnings play—  
With eyes of fire, he looks them through, 20  
And Pride in ruin lays.

## ON A HONEY BEE

DRINKING FROM A GLASS OF WINE AND  
DROWNED THEREIN

Published in 1809 as by Hezekiah Salem.  
This poem and the next illustrate the lighter  
vein of their author.

Thou, born to sip the lake or spring,  
Or quaff the waters of the stream,  
Why hither come, on vagrant wing?  
Does Bacchus tempting seem,  
Did he for you this glass prepare? 5  
Will I admit you to a share?

Did storms harass or foes perplex,  
Did wasps or king-birds bring dismay,  
Did wars distress, or labors vex,  
Or did you miss your way? 10  
A better seat you could not take  
Than on the margin of this lake.

Welcome!—I hail you to my glass:  
All welcome here you find;  
Here let the cloud of trouble pass, 15  
Here be all care resigned.  
This fluid never fails to please,  
And drown the griefs of men or bees.

What forced you here we cannot know,  
And you will scarcely tell,— 20  
But cheery we would have you go  
And bid a glad farewell:  
On lighter wings we bid you fly,—  
Your dart will now all foes defy.

Yet take not, oh! too deep a drink, 25  
And in this ocean die;  
Here bigger bees than you might sink,  
Even bees full six feet high.  
Like Pharaoh, then, you would be said  
To perish in a sea of red. 30

Do as you please, your will is mine;  
Enjoy it without fear,  
And your grave will be this glass of wine,  
Your epitaph—a tear;  
Go, take your seat in Charon's boat; 35  
We'll tell the hive, you died afloat.

## TO A CATY-DID

Published in 1815.

In a branch of willow hid  
Sings the evening Caty-did:  
From the lofty locust bough  
Feeding on a drop of dew,  
In her suit of green arrayed 5  
Hear her singing in the shade  
Caty-did, Caty-did, Caty-did!

While upon a leaf you tread,  
Or repose your little head,  
On your sheet of shadows laid, 10  
All the day you nothing said:  
Half the night your cheery tongue  
Reveled out its little song,  
Nothing else but Caty-did.

From your lodgings on the leaf 15  
Did you utter joy or grief?—  
Did you only mean to say,  
I have had my summer's day,  
And am passing, soon, away  
To the grave of Caty-did:— 20  
Poor, unhappy Caty-did!

But you would have uttered more  
Had you known of nature's power—  
From the world when you retreat,

29. Pharaoh—*Cf.* Ex. 14:26-31. 35. Charon's boat—the boat of the ferryman who carried souls across the river of Hades. 2. Caty-did—"A well-known insect, when full grown, about two inches in length, and of the exact color of a green leaf. It is of the genius [*sic*] cicada, or grasshopper kind, inhabiting the green foliage of trees and singing such a song as *Caty-did* in the evening, towards autumn." (Freneau's note)

And a leaf's your winding sheet,  
 Long before your spirit fled,  
 Who can tell but nature said,  
 Live again, my Caty-did!  
 Live and chatter, Caty-did.

Tell me, what did Caty do?  
 Did she mean to trouble you?  
 Why was Caty not forbid  
 To trouble little Caty-did?  
 Wrong indeed at you to fling,  
 Hurting no one while you sing  
 Caty-did! Caty-did! Caty-did!

Why continue to complain?  
 Caty tells me, she again  
 Will not give you plague or pain:—  
 Caty says you may be hid,  
 Caty will not go to bed  
 While you sing us Caty-did.  
 Caty-did! Caty-did! Caty-did!

But while singing, you forgot  
 To tell us what did Caty not:  
 Caty did not think of cold,  
 Flocks retiring to the fold,  
 Winter, with his wrinkles old,  
 Winter, that yourself foretold  
 When you gave us Caty-did.

Stay securely in your nest;  
 Caty now, will do her best,  
 All she can to make you blest;  
 But, you want no human aid—  
 Nature, when she formed you, said,  
 "Independent you are made,  
 My dear little Caty-did:  
 Soon yourself must disappear  
 With the verdure of the year,"—  
 And to go, we know not where,  
 With your song of Caty-did.

## 25 On the UNIVERSALITY AND OTHER ATTRIBUTES OF THE GOD OF NATURE

First published in the edition of 1815. It indicates that Freneau's deism was not a passing fancy but a lifelong view.

30 All that we see, about, abroad,  
 What is it all, but nature's God?  
 35 In meaner works discover'd here  
 No less than in the starry sphere.

In seas, on earth, this God is seen; 5  
 All that exist, upon him lean;  
 He lives in all, and never stray'd  
 40 A moment from the works he made:

His system fix'd on general laws  
 Bespeaks a wise creating cause; 10  
 Impartially he rules mankind  
 And all that on this globe we find.

45 Unchanged in all that seems to change,  
 Unbounded space is his great range;  
 To one vast purpose always true, 15  
 No time, with him, is old or new.

50 In all the attributes divine  
 Unlimited perfectings shine;  
 In these enwapt, in these complete,  
 All virtues in that centre meet. 20

55 This power who doth all powers transcend,  
 To all intelligence a friend,  
 Exists, the *greatest and the best*  
 Throughout all worlds, to make them blest.

60 All that he did he first approved, 25  
 He all things into *being* loved;  
 O'er all he made he still presides,  
 For them in life, or death provides.

23. best—"Jupiter, optimus, maximus.—Cicero." (Freneau's note)

# WASHINGTON IRVING

1783 - 1859

## I. AN AMUSED OBSERVER OF LIFE (1783-1815)

- 1783 Born April 3, in New York, youngest of eleven children of William and Sarah Sanders Irving. The gay son of a Presbyterian merchant.
- 1798 Entered law firm of Henry Masterton, but preferred scribbling and roving.
- 1802 Contributed to the *Morning Chronicle*, edited by his brother Peter, *Spectator*-like light satires of local theatrical and social life, signed "Jonathan Oldstyle, Gent."
- 1803 First contact with frontier in a journey up the Hudson to Montreal.
- 1804-1806 His brothers sent him abroad for his health. During these years he sky-larked in France, Italy, Holland, and England. In Rome he met Washington Allston, the artist, and almost became a painter; in other cities his interest was in the theater.
- 1806 Admitted to the New York bar, November 21.
- 1807-1808 January to January. Associated with brother William and with James K. Paulding in editing *Salmagundi*, Addisonian papers lampooning local theater, society, politics. This semimonthly ran for twenty numbers.
- 1809 Began *A History of New York*, by *Diedrich Knickerbocker*, in Philadelphia, as a burlesque on Dr. Samuel Mitchell's ponderous *Picture of New York* (1807). After Peter Irving relinquished his part, Washington condensed it into four introductory chapters, and developed his own history of the "Dutch dynasty." This established Irving's reputation. The death of his fiancée, Matilda Hoffman, daughter of his law preceptor, sobered him. Absorbed romantic poetry.
- 1810-1814 Became a partner in brother's cutlery firm; mingled in Washington society; edited the *Analectic Magazine* in Philadelphia.

## II. THE TRAVELER MAKES ROMANTIC SKETCHES (1815-1826)

- 1815-1832 Lived in England, where he met Scott, who confirmed his interest in legendary themes. Traveled also in Germany, Austria, France, and Spain.
- 1818 Failure of the Irving firm caused him to take up authorship.
- 1819-1820 Publication of *The Sketch-Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.*, in seven parts of four or five sketches each. Begun in May, 1819, the entire series of thirty-six was completed in September, 1820. Praised highly by *Edinburgh Review* and *Quarterly Review*.
- 1822 *Bracebridge Hall* published simultaneously in England and America. Crossed the Rhine to explore "the rich mine of German literature"; visited Dresden and Vienna.



- 1824 Collaborated with John Howard Payne on plays in Paris. *Tales of a Traveller* appeared, "a hodge-podge of minor German anecdotes" obtained second hand.

### III. CHRONICLER OF OLD SPAIN (1826-1859)

- 1826-1829 Made two diplomatic journeys to Spain and resided in the Alhambra as attaché to the American envoy.
- 1828 After putting aside translating Navarrete's *Voyages of Columbus*, he published *History of the Life and Voyages of Columbus*, drawn directly from government archives.
- 1829 Published *The Conquest of Granada*; also finished the *Legends of the Conquest of Spain*, printed in *Crayon Miscellany*, 1835.
- 1829-1831 He was secretary of the American Legation in London. Published *The Voyages and Discoveries of the Companions of Columbus*, 1831.
- 1832 Published *The Alhambra*, best of his Spanish material. Returned to the United States.
- 1835 Journey to the West, resulting in *A Tour on the Prairies*.
- 1836 Published *Astoria*, sponsored by John Jacob Astor, fur magnate.
- 1837 Published *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville, U.S.A.*, digested from the *Journal* of Captain B. L. E. Bonneville, concerned with experiences in the Rocky Mountains.
- 1842-1846 Minister to Spain.
- 1849 Published *Life of Oliver Goldsmith* and *The Lives of Mahomet and His Successors*.
- 1855 Published *Wolfert's Roost and Other Papers*, compiled from his notebooks.
- 1855-1859 *Life of George Washington* published, in five volumes.
- 1859 Died, November 28, at Sunnyside on the Hudson.
- 1866 Posthumous publication of *Spanish Papers and Other Miscellanies*.

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ican Book Co., 1934; and Saxe Commins, ed., *Selected Writings of Washington Irving*, Modern Library, 1945, are useful.

With Irving, dreamlike reverie and love of the picturesque find a place in American literature. A roistering democracy had little to inspire this urbane Knickerbocker. He preferred to indulge his fancy by casting a spell of romance over the Hudson, or by lingering in reverie over the Alhambra and other Old World shrines. New theories of government were not for him, but as a writer of belles-lettres he was our first success. He indicated the possibility in America of a literature not merely didactic or utilitarian. He had the taste of a squire and the attitude of a romantic. For politics and religion he had less concern than for character and manners. Intellectually he was of the eighteenth century, though he did his best work in the fantastic, legendary tale. He was primarily a chronicler, a writer of "tales of a traveler," in an "old style" that exquisitely expressed his personality. A genial observer, rather than a thinker about the major experiences of life, Irving was nevertheless immensely influential. Paulding, Willis, and the rest of the Knickerbocker group reflect the influence of his style, as do J. P. Kennedy, Donald Grant Mitchell, James Hall, Bret Harte, George William Curtis, and Charles Dudley Warner.

The later work of Irving is insufficiently known. In this period, retaining the genialities of a style already become a little antiquated, he turned to American history for his theme; and, himself a man of the library, wrote of the exploration of the West, of the voyages of Columbus, and of the life of Washington, intermingling these American topics with excursions into Mohammedan history. The science of historical research was not then developed; and though Irving exercised reasonable care in the collection of his materials, he wrote primarily as an artist. It was his aim to create a noble picture of past events, and in this he succeeded. Fashions in historical writing have changed, so that his books are now outmoded, and of course subsequent research has corrected many of his interpretations. Nevertheless, Irving also occupies an important place in the development of historical writing in the United States, being well nigh the first to clothe the muse of history in the garments of literature.

## KNICKERBOCKER'S HISTORY OF NEW YORK

These four chapters are taken from the third book of "Diedrich Knickerbocker's" *A History of New York*, which first appeared in 1809, and was revised in 1812 and subsequent editions, when some of the broad humor was eliminated. In the first edition this chapter began with paragraph eight.

Although begun as a burlesque on Samuel Mitchell's *Picture of New York* (1807), it only occasionally deals with the same topics. Irving prefixed the following explanation to the edition of 1848:

### THE AUTHOR'S APOLOGY

"The following work, in which, at the outset, nothing more was contemplated than a temporary *jeu d'esprit*, was commenced in company with my brother, the late Peter Irving, Esq. Our idea was, to parody a small handbook which had recently appeared, entitled *A Picture of New York*. Like that, our work was to begin with an historical sketch; to be followed by notices of the customs, manners, and institutions of the city; written in a serio-comic vein, and treating local errors, follies, and abuses with good-humored satire.

"To burlesque the pedantic lore displayed in certain American works, our historical sketch was to commence with the creation of the world; and we laid all

kinds of works under contribution for trite citations, relevant, or irrelevant, to give it the proper air of learned research. Before this crude mass of mock erudition could be digested into form, my brother departed for Europe, and I was left to prosecute the enterprise alone.

"I now altered the plan of the work. Discarding all idea of a parody on the *Picture of New York*, I determined that what had been originally intended as an introductory sketch, should comprise the whole work, and form a comic history of the city. I accordingly moulded the mass of citations and disquisitions into introductory chapters, forming the first book; but it soon became evident to me, that, like Robinson Crusoe with his boat, I had begun on too large a scale, and that, to launch my history successfully, I must reduce its proportions. I accordingly resolved to confine it to the period of the Dutch domination, which, in its rise, progress, and decline, presented that unity of subject required by classic rule. It was a period, also, at that time almost a *terra incognita* in history. In fact, I was surprised to find how few of my fellow-citizens were aware that New York had ever been called New Amsterdam, or had heard of the names of its early Dutch governors, or cared a straw about their ancient Dutch progenitors.

"This, then, broke upon me as the poetic age of our city; poetic from its very obscurity; and open, like the early and obscure days of ancient Rome, to all the embellishments of heroic fiction. I hailed my native city, as fortunate above all other American cities, in having an antiquity thus extending back into the regions of doubt and fable. . . .

"The main object of my work, in fact, had a bearing wide from the sober aim of history; but one which, I trust, will meet with some indulgence from poetic minds. It was to embody the traditions of the city in an amusing form; to illustrate its local humors, customs, and peculiarities; to clothe home scenes and places and familiar names with those imaginative and whimsical associations so seldom met with in our new country, but which live like charms and spells about the cities of the old world, binding the heart of the native inhabitant to his home.

"In this I have reason to believe I have in some measure succeeded. Before the appearance of my work the popular traditions of our city were unrecorded; the peculiar and racy customs and usages derived from our Dutch progenitors were unnoticed or regarded with indifference, or adverted to with a sneer. Now they form a convivial currency, and are brought forward on all occasions; they link our whole community together in good-humor and good fellowship; they are the rallying points of home feeling, the seasoning of our civic festivities, the staple of local tales and local pleasantries, and are so harped upon by our writers of popular fiction, that I find myself almost crowded off the legendary ground which I was the first to explore, by the host who have followed in my footsteps.

"I dwell on this head, because, at the first appearance of my work, its aim and drift were misapprehended by some of the descendants of the Dutch worthies; and because I understand that now and then one may still be found to regard it with a captious eye. The far greater part, however, I have reason to flatter myself, receive my good-humored picturings in the same temper in which they were executed; and when I find, after a lapse of nearly forty years, this hap-hazard production of my youth still cherished among them,—when I find its very name become a 'household word' and used to give the home stamp to everything recommended for popular acceptance, such as Knickerbocker societies, Knickerbocker insurance companies, Knickerbocker steamboats, Knickerbocker omnibuses, Knickerbocker bread, and Knickerbocker ice,—and when I find New Yorkers of Dutch descent priding themselves upon being 'genuine Knickerbockers,'—I please myself with the persuasion that I have struck the right chord."

The remaining books of the *History* treat of the following: Book IV records the reign of Wilhelmus Kieft (incidentally satirizing Jefferson's policies); Books V, VI, VII, narrate the battles of Peter Stuyvesant with the Swedes on the Delaware. The text used here is that of the Author's Revised Edition.

## BOOK III

IN WHICH IS RECORDED THE GOLDEN REIGN OF WOUTER VAN TWILLER

## CHAPTER I

SETTING FORTH THE UNPARALLELED VIRTUES OF THE RENOWNED WOUTER VAN TWILLER, AS LIKEWISE HIS UNUTTERABLE WISDOM IN THE LAW CASE OF WANDLE SCHOONHOVEN AND BARENT BLEECKER—AND THE GREAT ADMIRATION OF THE PUBLIC THEREAT

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GRIEVOUS and very much to be commiserated is the task of the feeling historian, who writes the history of his native land. If it fall to his lot to be the recorder of calamity or crime, the mournful page is watered with his tears; nor can he recall the most prosperous and blissful era, without a melancholy sigh at the reflection that it has passed away forever! I know not whether it be owing to an immoderate love for the simplicity of former times, or to that certain tenderness of heart incident to all sentimental historians; but I candidly confess that I cannot look back on the happier days of our city, which I now describe, without great dejection of spirit. With faltering hand do I withdraw the curtain of oblivion, that veils the modest merit of our venerable ancestors, and as their figures rise to my mental vision, humble myself before their mighty shades.

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Such are my feelings when I revisit the family mansion of the Knickerbockers, and spend a lonely hour in the chamber where hang the portraits of my forefathers, shrouded in dust, like the forms they represent. With pious reverence do I gaze on the countenances of those renowned burghers, who have preceded me in the steady march of existence,—whose sober and temperate blood now meanders through my veins, flowing slower and slower in its feeble conduits, until its current shall soon be stopped forever!

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These, I say to myself, are but frail memorials of the mighty men who flourished in the days of the patriarchs; but who, alas, have long since mouldered in that tomb towards which my steps are insensibly and irresistibly hastening! As I pace the darkened chamber and lose myself in melancholy musings, the shadowy images around me almost seem to steal once more into existence,—their countenances to assume the animation of life,—their eyes to pursue me in every movement! Carried away by the delusions of fancy, I almost imagine myself surrounded by the shades of the departed, and holding sweet converse with the worthies of antiquity! Ah, hapless Diedrich! born in a degenerate age, abandoned to the buffetings of fortune,—a stranger and a weary pilgrim in

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2. Wouter Van Twiller—(ca. 1580-1646) governor of New Netherlands from 1633 to 1637. 20. my feelings—Knickerbocker's, not Irving's.

thy native land,—blest with no weeping wife, nor family of helpless children, but doomed to wander neglected through those crowded streets, and elbowed by foreign upstarts from those fair abodes where once thine ancestors held sovereign empire!

- 5 Let me not, however, lose the historian in the man, nor suffer the doting recollections of age to overcome me, while dwelling with fond garrulity on the virtuous days of the patriarchs,—on those sweet days of simplicity and ease, which never more will dawn on the lovely island of Manna-hata.

- These melancholy reflections have been forced from me by the growing  
10 wealth and importance of New Amsterdam, which, I plainly perceive, are to involve it in all kinds of perils and disasters. Already, as I observed at the close of my last book, they had awakened the attentions of the mother-country. The usual mark of protection shown by mother-countries to wealthy colonies was forthwith manifested; a governor being sent out to rule over the province,  
15 and squeeze out of it as much revenue as possible. The arrival of a governor of course put an end to the protectorate of Oloffe the Dreamer. He appears, however, to have dreamt to some purpose during his sway, as we find him afterwards living as a patroon on a great landed estate on the banks of the Hudson; having virtually forfeited all right to his ancient appellation of Kort-  
20 landt or Lackland.

It was in the year of our Lord 1629 that Mynheer Wouter Van Twiller was appointed governor of the province of Nieuw Nederlandts, under the commission and control of their High Mightinesses the Lords States General of the United Netherlands, and the privileged West India Company.

- 25 This renowned old gentleman arrived at New Amsterdam in the merry month of June, the sweetest month in all the year; when dan Apollo seems to dance up the transparent firmament,—when the robin, the thrush, and a thousand other wanton songsters, make the woods to resound with amorous ditties, and the luxurious little boblincon revels among the clover-blossoms of the  
30 meadows,—all which happy coincidence persuaded the old dames of New Amsterdam, who were skilled in the art of foretelling events, that this was to be a happy and prosperous administration.

- The renowned Wouter (or Walter) Van Twiller was descended from a long line of Dutch burgomasters, who had successively dozed away their lives,  
35 and grown fat upon the bench of magistracy in Rotterdam; and who had comported themselves with such singular wisdom and propriety, that they were never either heard or talked of—which, next to being universally applauded, should be the object of ambition of all magistrates and rulers. There are two opposite ways by which some men make a figure in the world: one, by talk-  
40 ing faster than they think, and the other, by holding their tongues and not thinking at all. By the first, many a smatterer acquires the reputation of a man of quick parts; by the other, many a dunderpate, like the owl, the stupid-

8. **Manna-hata**—the Indian name, preferred also by Whitman, for New York. 16. **Oloffe the Dreamer**—Oloff Stevensen Van Cortlandt, one of the "Nine Men," or governor's council. Irving has burlesqued him in previous chapters. 21. The date was 1633, not 1629. Moreover, Van Twiller was not the first (see line 14) but the fifth Dutch governor. Irving is dependable, however, in referring to the petty squabbles and numerous unenforceable laws.

est of birds, comes to be considered the very type of wisdom. This, by the way, is a casual remark, which I would not, for the universe, have it thought I apply to Governor Van Twiller. It is true he was a man shut up within himself, like an oyster, and rarely spoke, except in monosyllables; but then it was allowed he seldom said a foolish thing. So invincible was his gravity that he was never known to laugh or even to smile through the whole course of a long and prosperous life. Nay, if a joke were uttered in his presence, that set light-minded hearers in a roar, it was observed to throw him into a state of perplexity. Sometimes he would deign to inquire into the matter, and when, after much explanation, the joke was made as plain as a pike-staff, he would continue to smoke his pipe in silence, and at length, knocking out the ashes, would exclaim, "Well! I see nothing in all that to laugh about."

With all his reflective habits, he never made up his mind on a subject. His adherents accounted for this by the astonishing magnitude of his ideas. He conceived every subject on so grand a scale that he had not room in his head to turn it over and examine both sides of it. Certain it is, that, if any matter were propounded to him on which ordinary mortals would rashly determine at first glance, he would put on a vague, mysterious look, shake his capacious head, smoke some time in profound silence, and at length observe, that "he had his doubts about the matter"; which gained him the reputation of a man slow of belief and not easily imposed upon. What is more, it gained him a lasting name; for to this habit of the mind has been attributed his surname of Twiller; which is said to be a corruption of the original Twijfeler, or, in plain English, *Doubter*.

The person of this illustrious old gentleman was formed and proportioned, as though it had been moulded by the hands of some cunning Dutch statuary, as a model of majesty and lordly grandeur. He was exactly five feet six inches in height, and six feet five inches in circumference. His head was a perfect sphere, and of such stupendous dimensions, that dame Nature, with all her sex's ingenuity, would have been puzzled to construct a neck capable of supporting it; wherefore she wisely declined the attempt, and settled it firmly on the top of his backbone, just between the shoulders. His body was oblong and particularly capacious at bottom; which was wisely ordered by Providence, seeing that he was a man of sedentary habits, and very averse to the idle labor of walking. His legs were short, but sturdy in proportion to the weight they had to sustain; so that when erect he had not a little the appearance of a beer-barrel on skids. His face, that infallible index of the mind, presented a vast expanse, unfurrowed by any of those lines and angles which disfigure the human countenance with what is termed expression. Two small gray eyes twinkled feebly in the midst, like two stars of lesser magnitude in a hazy firmament, and his full-fed cheeks, which seemed to have taken toll of everything that went into his mouth, were curiously mottled and streaked with dusky red, like a spitzenberg apple.

His habits were as regular as his person. He daily took his four stated meals, appropriating exactly an hour to each; he smoked and doubted eight hours, and he slept the remaining twelve of the four-and-twenty. Such was the re-

nowned Wouter Van Twiller,—a true philosopher, for his mind was either elevated above, or tranquilly settled below, the cares and perplexities of this world. He had lived in it for years, without feeling the least curiosity to know whether the sun revolved round it, or it round the sun; and he had watched,  
 5 for at least half a century, the smoke curling from his pipe to the ceiling, without once troubling his head with any of those numerous theories by which a philosopher would have perplexed his brain, in accounting for its rising above the surrounding atmosphere.

In his council he presided with great state and solemnity. He sat in a huge  
 10 chair of solid oak, hewn in the celebrated forest of the Hague, fabricated by an experienced timmerman of Amsterdam, and curiously carved about the arms and feet, into exact imitations of gigantic eagle's claws. Instead of a sceptre, he swayed a long Turkish pipe, wrought with jasmin and amber, which had been presented to a stadtholder of Holland at the conclusion of a  
 15 treaty with one of the petty Barbary powers. In this stately chair would he sit, and this magnificent pipe would he smoke, shaking his right knee with a constant motion, and fixing his eye for hours together upon a little print of Amsterdam, which hung in a black frame against the opposite wall of the council-chamber. Nay, it has even been said, that when any deliberation of extraordinary  
 20 length and intricacy was on the carpet, the renowned Wouter would shut his eyes for full two hours at a time, that he might not be disturbed by external objects; and at such times the internal commotion of his mind was evinced by certain regular guttural sounds, which his admirers declared were merely the noise of conflict, made by his contending doubts and opinions.

It is with infinite difficulty I have been enabled to collect these biographical  
 25 anecdotes of the great man under consideration. The facts respecting him were so scattered and vague, and divers of them so questionable in point of authenticity, that I have had to give up the search after many, and decline the admission of still more, which would have tended to heighten the coloring  
 30 of his portrait.

I have been the more anxious to delineate fully the person and habits of Wouter Van Twiller, from the consideration that he was not only the first, but also the best governor that ever presided over this ancient and respectable  
 35 province; and so tranquil and benevolent was his reign, that I do not find throughout the whole of it a single instance of any offender being brought to punishment,—a most indubitable sign of a merciful governor, and a case unparalleled, excepting in the reign of the illustrious King Log, from whom, it is hinted, the renowned Van Twiller was a lineal descendant.

The very outset of the career of this excellent magistrate was distinguished  
 40 by an example of legal acumen, that gave flattering presage of a wise and equitable administration. The morning after he had been installed in office, and at the moment that he was making his breakfast from a prodigious earthen dish, filled with milk and Indian pudding, he was interrupted by the appearance of Wandle Schoonhoven, a very important old burgher of New Amster-

11. **timmerman**—cabinetmaker. 14. **stadtholder**—governor. 15. **Barbary powers**—the piratical Moslem states on the African shore of the Mediterranean, to which maritime powers were forced to pay tribute. 37. **King Log**—In one of Aesop's fables the frogs asked Jove for a king, and he gave them a log of wood to be their ruler.

dam, who complained bitterly of one Barent Bleecker, inasmuch as he refused to come to a settlement of accounts, seeing that there was a heavy balance in favor of the said Wandle. Governor Van Twiller, as I have already observed, was a man of few words; he was likewise a mortal enemy to multiplying writings—or being disturbed at his breakfast. Having listened attentively to the statement of Wandle Schoonhoven, giving an occasional grunt, as he shovelled a spoonful of Indian pudding into his mouth,—either as a sign that he relished the dish, or comprehended the story,—he called unto him his constable, and pulling out of his breeches-pocket a huge jack-knife, dispatched it after the defendant as a summons, accompanied by his tobacco-box as a warrant.

This summary process was as effectual in those simple days as was the sealing of the great Haroun Alraschid among the true believers. The two parties being confronted before him, each produced a book of accounts, written in a language and character that would have puzzled any but a High-Dutch commentator, or a learned decipherer of Egyptian obelisks. The sage Wouter took them one after the other, and having poised them in his hands, and attentively counted over the number of leaves, fell straightway into a very great doubt, and smoked for half an hour without saying a word; at length, laying his finger beside his nose, and shutting his eyes for a moment, with the air of a man who has just caught a subtle idea by the tail, he slowly took his pipe from his mouth, puffed forth a column of tobacco-smoke, and with marvellous gravity and solemnity pronounced, that, having carefully counted over the leaves and weighed the books, it was found, that one was just as thick and as heavy as the other: therefore, it was the final opinion of the court, that the accounts were equally balanced: therefore, Wandle should give Barent a receipt, and Barent should give Wandle a receipt, and the constable should pay the costs.

This decision, being straightway made known, diffused general joy throughout New Amsterdam, for the people immediately perceived that they had a very wise and equitable magistrate to rule over them. But its happiest effect was, that not another lawsuit took place throughout the whole of his administration; and the office of constable fell into such decay, that there was not one of those losel scouts known in the province for many years. I am the more particular in dwelling on this transaction, not only because I deem it one of the most sage and righteous judgments on record, and well worthy the attention of modern magistrates, but because it was a miraculous event in the history of the renowned Wouter—being the only time he was ever known to come to a decision in the whole course of his life.

## CHAPTER II

CONTAINING SOME ACCOUNT OF THE GRAND COUNCIL OF NEW AMSTERDAM, AS ALSO DIVERS ESPECIAL GOOD PHILOSOPHICAL REASONS WHY AN ALDERMAN SHOULD BE FAT—WITH OTHER PARTICULARS TOUCHING THE STATE OF THE PROVINCE

In treating of the early governors of the province, I must caution my readers against confounding them, in point of dignity and power, with those worthy

12. Haroun Alraschid—the celebrated caliph of Baghdad of the eighth century, mentioned in the Arabian Nights. 12. true believers—Mohammedans. 32. losel scouts—worthless sleuths.



gentlemen who are whimsically denominated governors in this enlightened republic,—a set of unhappy victims of popularity, who are, in fact, the most dependent, hen-pecked beings in the community; doomed to bear the secret goadings and corrections of their own party, and the sneers and revilings of  
 5 the whole world beside; set up, like geese at Christmas holidays, to be pelted and shot at by every whipster and vagabond in the land. On the contrary, the Dutch governors enjoyed that uncontrolled authority vested in all commanders of distant colonies or territories. They were, in a manner, absolute despots in their little domains, lording it, if so disposed, over both law and gospel, and  
 10 accountable to none but the mother-country; which it is well known is astonishingly deaf to all complaints against its governors, provided they discharge the main duty of their station—squeezing out a good revenue. This hint will be of importance, to prevent my readers from being seized with doubt and incredulity, whenever, in the course of this authentic history, they encounter  
 15 the uncommon circumstance of a governor acting with independence, and in opposition to the opinions of the multitude.

To assist the doubtful Wouter in the arduous business of legislation, a board of magistrates was appointed, which presided immediately over the police. This potent body consisted of a schout or bailiff, with powers between those of the  
 20 present mayor and sheriff; five burgermeesters, who were equivalent to aldermen; and five schepens, who officiated as scrubs, subdevils, or bottleholders to the burgermeesters, in the same manner as do assistant aldermen to their principals at the present day,—it being their duty to fill the pipes of the lordly burgermeesters, hunt the markets for delicacies for corporation dinners, and to discharge such other little offices of kindness as were occasionally required.  
 25 It was, moreover, tacitly understood, though not specifically enjoined, that they should consider themselves as butts for the blunt wits of the burgermeesters, and should laugh most heartily at all their jokes; but this last was a duty as rarely called in action in those days as it is at present, and was shortly re-  
 30 mitted, in consequence of the tragical death of a fat little schepen, who actually died of suffocation in an unsuccessful effort to force a laugh at one of burgermeester Van Zandt's best jokes.

In return for these humble services, they were permitted to say *yes* and *no* at the council-board, and to have that enviable privilege, the run of the public  
 35 kitchen,—being graciously permitted to eat, and drink, and smoke, at all those snug junketings and public gormandizings for which the ancient magistrates were equally famous with their modern successors. The post of schepen, therefore, like that of assistant alderman, was eagerly coveted by all your burghers of a certain description, who have a huge relish for good feeding, and an  
 40 humble ambition to be great men in a small way,—who thirst after a little brief authority, that shall render them the terror of the alms-house and the bridewell,—that shall enable them to lord it over obsequious poverty, vagrant vice, outcast prostitution, and hunger-driven dishonesty,—that shall give to their beck a houndlike pack of catchpolls and bumbailiffs—tenfold greater

6. **whipster**—mischievous person. 42. **bridewell**—A bridewell is a jail. The word derives from the Bridewell in London, a famous old jail so named because of the near-by spring, St. Bride's Well.

rogues than the culprits they hunt down! My readers will excuse this sudden warmth, which I confess is unbecoming of a grave historian,—but I have a mortal antipathy to catchpolls, bumbailiffs, and little-great men.

The ancient magistrates of this city correspond with those of the present time no less in form, magnitude, and intellect, than in prerogative and privilege. The burgomasters, like our aldermen, were generally chosen by weight,—and not only the weight of the body, but likewise the weight of the head. It is a maxim practically observed in all honest, plain-thinking, regular cities, that an alderman should be fat,—and the wisdom of this can be proved to a certainty. That the body is in some measure an image of the mind, or rather that the mind is moulded to the body, like melted lead to the clay in which it is cast, has been insisted on by many philosophers, who have made human nature their peculiar study; for, as a learned gentleman of our own city observes, “there is a constant relation between the moral character of all intelligent creatures and their physical constitution, between their habits and the structure of their bodies.” Thus we see that a lean, spare, diminutive body is generally accompanied by a petulant, restless, meddling mind: either the mind wears down the body, by its continual motion, or else the body, not affording the mind sufficient house-room, keeps it continually in a state of fretfulness, tossing and worrying about from the uneasiness of its situation. Whereas your round, sleek, fat, unwieldy periphery is ever attended by a mind like itself, tranquil, torpid, and at ease; and we may always observe, that your well-fed, robustious burghers are in general very tenacious of their ease and comfort, being great enemies to noise, discord, and disturbance,—and surely none are more likely to study the public tranquillity than those who are so careful of their own. Who ever hears of fat men heading a riot, or herding together in turbulent mobs?—no—no. It is your lean, hungry men who are continually worrying society, and setting the whole community by the ears.

The divine Plato, whose doctrines are not sufficiently attended to by philosophers of the present age, allows to every man three souls: one, immortal and rational, seated in the brain, that it may overlook and regulate the body; a second, consisting of the surly and irascible passions which, like belligerent powers, lie encamped around the heart; a third, mortal and sensual, destitute of reason, gross and brutal in its propensities, and enchained in the belly, that it may not disturb the divine soul by its ravenous howlings. Now, according to this excellent theory, what can be more clear than that your fat alderman is most likely to have the most regular and well-conditioned mind. His head is like a huge spherical chamber, containing a prodigious mass of soft brains, whereon the rational soul lies softly and snugly couched, as on a feather-bed; and the eyes, which are the windows of the bed-chamber, are usually half closed, that its slumberings may not be disturbed by external objects. A mind thus comfortably lodged, and protected from disturbance, is manifestly most likely to perform its functions with regularity and ease. By dint of good feeding, moreover, the mortal and malignant soul, which is confined in the belly, and which, by its raging and roaring, puts the irritable soul in the neigh-

borhood of the heart in an intolerable passion, and thus renders men crusty and quarrelsome when hungry, is completely pacified, silenced, and put to rest,—whereupon a host of honest, good-fellow qualities and kind-hearted affections, which had lain *perdu*, slyly peeping out of the loop-holes of the heart, finding this Cerberus asleep, do pluck up their spirits, turn out one and all in their holiday suits, and gambol up and down the diaphragm,—disposing their possessor to laughter, good-humor, and a thousand friendly offices towards his fellow-mortals.

As a board of magistrates, formed on this principle, think but very little, they are the less likely to differ and wrangle about favorite opinions; and as they generally transact business upon a hearty dinner, they are naturally disposed to be lenient and indulgent in the administration of their duties. Charlemagne was conscious of this, and therefore ordered in his cartularies, that no judge should hold a court of justice, except in the morning, on an empty stomach.—A pitiful rule, which I can never forgive, and which I warrant bore hard upon all the poor culprits in the kingdom. The more enlightened and humane generation of the present day have taken an opposite course, and have so managed that the aldermen are the best-fed men in the community; feasting lustily on the fat things of the land, and gorging so heartily on oysters and turtles, that in process of time they acquire the activity of the one, and the form, the waddle, and the green fat of the other. The consequence is, as I have just said, these luxurious feastings do produce such a dulcet equanimity and repose of the soul, rational and irrational, that their transactions are proverbial for unvarying monotony; and the profound laws which they enact in their dozing moments, amid the labors of digestion, are quietly suffered to remain as dead letters, and never enforced, when awake. In a word, your fair, round-bellied burgomaster, like a full-fed mastiff, dozes quietly at the house-door, always at home, and always at hand to watch over its safety; but as to electing a lean, meddling candidate to the office, as has now and then been done, I would as lief put a greyhound to watch the house, or a race-horse to draw an ox-wagon.

The burgomasters, then, as I have already mentioned, were wisely chosen by weight, and the schepens, or assistant aldermen, were appointed to attend upon them and help them eat; but the latter, in the course of time, when they had been fed and fattened into sufficient bulk of body and drowsiness of brain, became very eligible candidates for the burgomasters' chairs, having fairly eaten themselves into office, as a mouse eats his way into a comfortable lodgment in a goodly, blue-nosed, skimmed-milk, New-England cheese.

Nothing could equal the profound deliberations that took place between the renowned Wouter and these his worthy compeers, unless it be the sage divans of some of our modern corporations. They would sit for hours, smoking and dozing over public affairs, without speaking a word to interrupt that perfect stillness so necessary to deep reflection. Under the sober sway of Wouter Van Twiller and these his worthy coadjutors, the infant settlement waxed vigorous

5. **Cerberus**—in classical mythology the three-headed dog guarding the entrance to Hades.  
 13. **cartularies**—records, codes. Probably a slip for “capitularies,” the proper historical term.  
 40. **divans**—oriental councils of state. 41. **corporations**—municipalities.

apace, gradually emerging from the swamps and forests, and exhibiting that mingled appearance of town and country, customary in new cities, and which at this day may be witnessed in the city of Washington,—that immense metropolis, which makes so glorious an appearance on paper.

It was a pleasing sight, in those times, to behold the honest burgher, like a patriarch of yore, seated on the bench at the door of his whitewashed house, under the shade of some gigantic sycamore or overhanging willow. Here would he smoke his pipe of a sultry afternoon, enjoying the soft southern breeze, and listening with silent gratulation to the clucking of his hens, the cackling of his geese, and the sonorous grunting of his swine,—that combination of farm-yard melody which may truly be said to have a silver sound, inasmuch as it conveys a certain assurance of profitable marketing.

The modern spectator, who wanders through the streets of this populous city, can scarcely form an idea of the different appearance they presented in the primitive days of the Doubter. The busy hum of multitudes, the shouts of revelry, the rumbling equipages of fashion, the rattling of accursed carts, and all the spirit-grieving sounds of brawling commerce, were unknown in the settlement of New Amsterdam. The grass grew quietly in the highways; the bleating sheep and frolicsome calves sported about the verdant ridge, where now the Broadway loungers take their morning stroll; the cunning fox or ravenous wolf skulked in the woods, where now are to be seen the dens of Gomez and his righteous fraternity of money-brokers; and flocks of vociferous geese cackled about the fields where now the great Tammany wigwam and the patriotic tavern of Martling echo with the wranglings of the mob.

In these good times did a true and enviable equality of rank and property prevail, equally removed from the arrogance of wealth, and the servility and heart-burnings of repining poverty; and, what in my mind is still more conducive to tranquillity and harmony among friends, a happy equality of intellect was likewise to be seen. The minds of the good burghers of New Amsterdam seemed all to have been cast in one mould, and to be those honest, blunt minds, which, like certain manufactures, are made by the gross, and considered as exceedingly good for common use.

Thus it happens that your true dull minds are generally preferred for public employ, and especially promoted to city honors; your keen intellects, like razors, being considered too sharp for common service. I know that it is common to rail at the unequal distribution of riches, as the great source of jealousies, broils, and heart-breakings; whereas, for my part, I verily believe it is the sad inequality of intellect that prevails, that embroils communities more than anything else; and I have remarked that your knowing people, who are so much wiser than anybody else, are eternally keeping society in a ferment. Happily for New Amsterdam, nothing of the kind was known within its walls; the very words of learning, education, taste, and talents were unheard of; a bright genius was an animal unknown, and a blue-stocking lady would

3. **Washington**—The early nineteenth century is filled with complaints about the primitive condition of the city. 22. **Gomez**—probably a usurer. 23. **Tammany**—a benevolent order already wielding political influence contrary to Irving's Federalist view. Its social affairs were held in Martling's tavern.

have been regarded with as much wonder as a horned frog or a fiery dragon. No man, in fact, seemed to know more than his neighbor, nor any man to know more than an honest man ought to know, who has nobody's business to mind but his own; the parson and the council clerk were the only men that  
 5 could read in the community, and the sage Van Twiller always signed his name with a cross.

Thrice happy and ever to be envied little Burgh! existing in all the security of harmless insignificance,—unnoticed and unenvied by the world, without ambition, without vainglory, without riches, without learning, and all their  
 10 train of carking cares;—and as of yore, in the better days of man, the deities were wont to visit him on earth and bless his rural habitations, so, we are told, in the sylvan days of New Amsterdam, the good St. Nicholas would often make his appearance in his beloved city, of a holiday afternoon, riding jollily among the tree-tops, or over the roofs of the houses, now and then drawing  
 15 forth magnificent presents from his breeches-pockets, and dropping them down the chimneys of his favorites. Whereas, in these degenerate days of iron and brass, he never shows us the light of his countenance, nor ever visits us, save one night in the year, when he rattles down the chimneys of the descendants of patriarchs, confining his presents merely to the children, in token of the  
 20 degeneracy of the parents.

Such are the comfortable and thriving effects of a fat government. The province of the New Netherlands, destitute of wealth, possessed a sweet tranquillity that wealth could never purchase. There were neither public commotions, nor private quarrels; neither parties, nor sects, nor schisms; neither persecutions, nor trials, nor punishments; nor were there counsellors, attorneys,  
 25 catchpolls, or hangmen. Every man attended to what little business he was lucky enough to have, or neglected it if he pleased, without asking the opinion of his neighbor. In those days nobody meddled with concerns above his comprehension; nor thrust his nose into other people's affairs; nor neglected to  
 30 correct his own conduct, and reform his own character, in his zeal to pull to pieces the characters of others;—but, in a word, every respectable citizen ate when he was not hungry, drank when he was not thirsty, and went regularly to bed when the sun set and the fowls went to roost, whether he was sleepy or not; all which tended so remarkably to the population of the settlement,  
 35 that I am told every dutiful wife throughout New Amsterdam made a point of enriching her husband with at least one child a year, and very often a brace,—this superabundance of good things clearly constituting the true luxury of life, according to the favorite Dutch maxim, that “more than enough constitutes a feast.” Everything, therefore, went on exactly as it should do, and in  
 40 the usual words employed by historians to express the welfare of a country, “the profoundest *tranquillity* and *repose* reigned throughout the province.”

16-17. *iron and brass*—According to Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Bk. I, lines 89-150, the four ages of the world are, in the order of increasing degeneracy, the ages of gold, silver, brass, and iron. Irving is, of course, playing on words.

## CHAPTER III

HOW THE TOWN OF NEW AMSTERDAM AROSE OUT OF MUD, AND CAME TO BE  
MARVELLOUSLY POLISHED AND POLITE—TOGETHER WITH A PICTURE OF THE  
MANNERS OF OUR GREAT-GREAT-GRANDFATHERS

Manifold are the tastes and dispositions of the enlightened *literati*, who turn 5  
over the pages of history. Some there be whose hearts are brimful of the yeast  
of courage, and whose bosoms do work, and swell, and foam, with untried  
valor, like a barrel of new cider, or a train-band captain, fresh from under the  
hands of his tailor. This doughty class of readers can be satisfied with nothing  
but bloody battles, and horrible encounters; they must be continually storming 10  
forts, sacking cities, springing mines, marching up to the muzzles of cannon,  
charging bayonet through every page, and revelling in gunpowder and carnage.  
Others, who are of a less martial, but equally ardent imagination, and who,  
withal, are a little given to the marvellous, will dwell with wondrous satisfac-  
tion on descriptions of prodigies, unheard-of events, hair-breadth escapes, hardy 15  
adventures, and all those astonishing narrations which just amble along the  
boundary-line of possibility. A third class, who, not to speak slightly of them,  
are of a lighter turn, and skim over the records of past times, as they do over  
the edifying pages of a novel, merely for relaxation and innocent amusement,  
do singularly delight in treasons, executions, Sabine rapes, Tarquin outrages, 20  
conflagrations, murders, and all the other catalogue of hideous crimes, which,  
like cayenne in cookery, do give a pungency and flavor to the dull detail of  
history. While a fourth class, of more philosophic habits, do diligently pore  
over the musty chronicles of time, to investigate the operations of the human  
kind, and watch the gradual changes in men and manners, effected by the 25  
progress of knowledge, the vicissitudes of events, or the influence of situation.

If the three first classes find but little wherewithal to solace themselves in  
the tranquil reign of Wouter Van Twiller, I entreat them to exert their pa-  
tience for a while, and bear with the tedious picture of happiness, prosperity,  
and peace, which my duty as a faithful historian obliges me to draw; and I 30  
promise them, that, as soon as I can possibly alight on anything horrible, un-  
common, or impossible, it shall go hard, but I will make it afford them enter-  
tainment. This being premised, I turn with great complacency to the fourth  
class of my readers, who are men, or, if possible, women after my own heart;  
grave, philosophical, and investigating; fond of analyzing characters, of taking 35  
a start from first causes, and so hunting a nation down, through all the mazes  
of innovation and improvement. Such will naturally be anxious to witness the  
first development of the newly-hatched colony, and the primitive manners and  
customs prevalent among its inhabitants, during the halcyon reign of Van  
Twiller, or the Doubter. 40

I will not grieve their patience, however, by describing minutely the increase  
and improvement of New Amsterdam. Their own imaginations will doubt-  
less present to them the good burghers, like so many painstaking and perse-

8. train-band—militia. 20. Sabine rapes . . . —famous episodes recorded in the first por-  
tions of Livy's *History of Rome*.

vering beavers, slowly and surely pursuing their labors: they will behold the prosperous transformation from the rude log hut to the stately Dutch mansion, with brick front, glazed windows, and tiled roof; from the tangled thicket to the luxuriant cabbage-garden; and from the skulking Indian to the ponderous burgomaster. In a word, they will picture to themselves the steady, silent and undeviating march of prosperity incident to a city destitute of pride or ambition, cherished by a fat government, and whose citizens do nothing in a hurry.

The sage council, as has been mentioned in a preceding chapter, not being able to determine upon any plan for the building of their city,—the cows, in a laudable fit of patriotism, took it under their peculiar charge, and, as they went to and from pasture, established paths through the bushes, on each side of which the good folks built their houses,—which is one cause of the rambling and picturesque turns and labyrinths which distinguish certain streets of New York at this very day.

The houses of the higher class were generally constructed of wood, excepting the gable end which was of small, black and yellow Dutch bricks, and always faced on the street, as our ancestors, like their descendants, were very much given to outward show, and were noted for putting the best leg foremost. The house was always furnished with abundance of large doors and small windows on every floor, the date of its erection was curiously designated by iron figures on the front, and on the top of the roof was perched a fierce little weathercock, to let the family into the important secret which way the wind blew.

These, like the weathercocks on the tops of our steeples, pointed so many different ways, that every man could have a wind to his mind;—the most stanch and loyal citizens, however, always went according to the weathercock on the top of the governor's house, which was certainly the most correct, as he had a trusty servant employed every morning to climb up and set it to the right quarter.

In those good days of simplicity and sunshine, a passion for cleanliness was the leading principle in domestic economy, and the universal test of an able housewife,—a character which formed the utmost ambition of our unenlightened grandmothers. The front-door was never opened, except on marriages, funerals, New-Year's days, the festival of St. Nicholas, or some such great occasion. It was ornamented with a gorgeous brass knocker, curiously wrought, sometimes in the device of a dog, and sometimes of a lion's head, and was daily burnished with such religious zeal, that it was oftentimes worn out by the very precautions taken for its preservation. The whole house was constantly in a state of inundation under the discipline of mops and brooms and scrubbing-brushes; and the good housewives of those days were a kind of amphibious animal, delighting exceedingly to be dabbling in water,—insomuch that an historian of the day gravely tells us, that many of his townswomen grew to have webbed fingers like unto a duck; and some of them, he had little doubt, could the matter be examined into, would be found to have the tails of mermaids,—but this I look upon to be a mere sport of fancy, or, what is worse, a wilful misrepresentation.

The grand parlor was the sanctum sanctorum, where the passion for clean-

ing was indulged without control. In this sacred apartment no one was permitted to enter, excepting the mistress and her confidential maid, who visited it once a week, for the purpose of giving it a thorough cleaning, and putting things to rights,—always taking the precaution of leaving their shoes at the door, and entering devoutly on their stocking-feet. After scrubbing the floor, sprinkling it with fine white sand, which was curiously stroked into angles and curves and rhomboids with a broom,—after washing the windows, rubbing and polishing the furniture, and putting a new bunch of evergreens in the fireplace,—the window-shutters were again closed to keep out the flies, and the room carefully locked up until the revolution of time brought round the weekly cleaning-day. 5 10

As to the family, they always entered in at the gate, and most generally lived in the kitchen. To have seen a numerous household assembled round the fire, one would have imagined that he was transported back to those happy days of primeval simplicity, which float before our imaginations like golden visions. The fireplaces were of a truly patriarchal magnitude, where the whole family, old and young, master and servant, black and white, nay, even the very cat and dog, enjoyed a community of privilege, and had each a right to a corner. Here the old burgher would sit in perfect silence, puffing his pipe, looking in the fire with half-shut eyes, and thinking of nothing for hours together; the goede vrouw, on the opposite side, would employ herself diligently in spinning yarn, or knitting stockings. The young folks would crowd around the hearth, listening with breathless attention to some old crone of a negro, who was the oracle of the family, and who, perched like a raven in a corner of the chimney, would croak forth for a long winter afternoon a string of incredible stories about New-England witches,—grisly ghosts, horses without heads,—and hair-breadth escapes, and bloody encounters among the Indians. 15 20 25

In those happy days a well-regulated family always rose with the dawn, dined at eleven, and went to bed at sunset. Dinner was invariably a private meal, and the fat old burghers showed incontestable signs of disapprobation and uneasiness at being surprised by a visit from a neighbor on such occasions. But though our worthy ancestors were thus singularly averse to giving dinners, yet they kept up the social bands of intimacy by occasional banquetings, called tea-parties. 30

These fashionable parties were generally confined to the higher classes, or noblesse, that is to say, such as kept their own cows, and drove their own wagons. The company commonly assembled at three o'clock, and went away about six, unless it was in winter-time, when the fashionable hours were a little earlier, that the ladies might get home before dark. The tea-table was crowned with a huge earthen dish, well stored with slices of fat pork, fried brown, cut up into morsels, and swimming in gravy. The company being seated round the genial board, and each furnished with a fork, evinced their dexterity in launching at the fattest pieces in this mighty dish,—in much the same manner as sailors harpoon porpoises at sea, or our Indians spear salmon in the lakes. Sometimes the table was graced with immense apple-pies, or saucers full of preserved peaches and pears; but it was always sure to boast an enormous dish of balls of sweetened dough, fried in hog's fat, and called doughnuts, or 35 40 45



olykoecks,—a delicious kind of cake, at present scarce known in this city, except in genuine Dutch families.

The tea was served out of a majestic Delft tea-pot, ornamented with paintings of fat little Dutch shepherds and shepherdesses tending pigs with boats sailing in the air, and houses built in the clouds, and sundry other ingenious Dutch fantasies. The beaux distinguished themselves by their adroitness in replenishing this pot from a huge copper tea-kettle, which would have made the pigmy macaronies of these degenerate days sweat merely to look at it. To sweeten the beverage, a lump of sugar was laid beside each cup, and the company alternately nibbled and sipped with great decorum, until an improvement was introduced by a shrewd and economic old lady, which was to suspend a large lump directly over the tea-table, by a string from the ceiling, so that it could be swung from mouth to mouth,—an ingenious expedient, which is still kept up by some families in Albany, but which prevails without exception in Communipaw, Bergen, Flatbush, and all our uncontaminated Dutch villages.

At these primitive tea-parties the utmost propriety and dignity of deportment prevailed. No flirting nor coquetting,—no gambling of old ladies, nor hoyden chattering and romping of young ones,—no self-satisfied struttings of wealthy gentlemen, with their brains in their pockets, nor amusing conceits and monkey divertisements of smart young gentlemen, with no brains at all. On the contrary, the young ladies seated themselves demurely in their rush-bottomed chairs, and knit their own woollen stockings; nor ever opened their lips excepting to say *yah*, *Mynheer*, or, *yah, yah, Vrouw*, to any question that was asked them; behaving in all things like decent, well-educated damsels. As to the gentlemen, each of them tranquilly smoked his pipe, and seemed lost in contemplation of the blue and white tiles with which the fireplaces were decorated; wherein sundry passages of Scripture were piously portrayed: Tobit and his dog figured to great advantage; Haman swung conspicuously on his gibbet; and Jonah appeared most manfully bouncing out of the whale, like Harlequin through a barrel of fire.

The parties broke up without noise and without confusion. They were carried home by their own carriages, that is to say, by the vehicles nature had provided them, excepting such of the wealthy as could afford to keep a wagon. The gentlemen gallantly attended their fair ones to their respective abodes, and took leave of them with a hearty smack at the door: which, as it was an established piece of etiquette, done in perfect simplicity and honesty of heart, occasioned no scandal at that time, nor should it at the present;—if our great-grandfathers approved of the custom, it would argue a great want of deference in their descendants to say a word against it.

3. Delft—a Dutch manufacturing town. 8. macaronies—fops. 15. Communipaw . . . —early Dutch settlements on the shores of New York Bay. 28. Tobit—hero of the book of that name in the Apocrypha. 29. Haman—Cf. Esther, 7: 9-10. 30. Jonah—Cf. Jonah, 2: 10. 30. Harlequin—a character in pantomime.

## CHAPTER IV

CONTAINING FURTHER PARTICULARS OF THE GOLDEN AGE, AND WHAT CONSTITUTED A FINE LADY AND GENTLEMAN IN THE DAYS OF WALTER THE DOUBTER

In this dulcet period of my history, when the beauteous island of Manna-hata presented a scene, the very counterpart of those glowing pictures drawn of the golden reign of Saturn, there was, as I have before observed, a happy ignorance, an honest simplicity prevalent among its inhabitants, which, were I even able to depict, would be but little understood by the degenerate age for which I am doomed to write. Even the female sex, those arch innovators upon the tranquillity, the honesty, and gray-beard customs of society, seemed for a while to conduct themselves with incredible sobriety and comeliness. 5 10

Their hair, untortured by the abominations of art, was scrupulously pomatumed back from their foreheads with a candle, and covered with a little cap of quilted calico, which fitted exactly to their heads. Their petticoats of linsey-woolsey were striped with a variety of gorgeous dyes,—though I must confess these gallant garments were rather short, scarce reaching below the knee; but then they made up in the number, which generally equalled that of the gentleman's small-clothes; and what is still more praiseworthy, they were all of their own manufacture,—of which circumstance, as may well be supposed, they were not a little vain. 15 20

These were the honest days in which every woman staid at home, read the Bible, and wore pockets,—ay, and that too of a goodly size, fashioned with patchwork into many curious devices, and ostentatiously worn on the outside. These, in fact, were convenient receptacles, where all good housewives carefully stored away such things as they wished to have at hand; by which means they often came to be incredibly crammed; and I remember there was a story current, when I was a boy, that the lady of Wouter Van Twiller once had occasion to empty her right pocket in search of a wooden ladle, when the contents filled a couple of corn-baskets, and the utensil was discovered lying among some rubbish in one corner;—but we must not give too much faith to all these stories, the anecdotes of those remote periods being very subject to exaggeration. 25 30

Besides these notable pockets, they likewise wore scissors and pin-cushions suspended from their girdles by red ribands, or, among the more opulent and showy classes, by brass, and even silver chains,—indubitable tokens of thrifty housewives and industrious spinsters. I cannot say much in vindication of the shortness of the petticoats; it doubtless was introduced for the purpose of giving the stockings a chance to be seen, which were generally of blue worsted, with magnificent red clocks,—or, perhaps, to display a well-turned ankle, and a neat, though serviceable foot, set off by a high-heeled leathern shoe, with a large and splendid silver buckle. Thus we find that the gentle sex in all ages have shown the same disposition to infringe a little upon the laws of decorum, in order to betray a lurking beauty, or gratify an innocent love of finery. 35 40

From the sketch here given, it will be seen that our good grandmothers

6. reign of Saturn—that is, golden age—a literary tag from Virgil, *Eclagues*, Bk. IV, line 6.

differed considerably in their ideas of a fine figure from their scantily dressed descendants of the present day. A fine lady, in those times, waddled under more clothes, even on a fair summer's day, than would have clad the whole bevy of a modern ball-room. Nor were they the less admired by the gentlemen in consequence thereof. On the contrary, the greatness of a lover's passion seemed to increase in proportion to the magnitude of its object,—and a voluminous damsel, arrayed in a dozen of petticoats, was declared by a Low-Dutch sonneteer of the province to be radiant as a sunflower, and luxuriant as a full-blown cabbage. Certain it is, that in those days the heart of a lover could not contain more than one lady at a time; whereas the heart of a modern gallant has often room enough to accommodate half a dozen. The reason of which I conclude to be, that either the hearts of the gentlemen have grown larger, or the persons of the ladies smaller: this, however, is a question for physiologists to determine.

But there was a secret charm in these petticoats, which, no doubt, entered into the consideration of the prudent gallants. The wardrobe of a lady was in those days her only fortune; and she who had a good stock of petticoats and stockings was as absolutely an heiress as is a Kamtchatka damsel with a store of bear-skins, or a Lapland belle with a plenty of reindeer. The ladies, therefore, were very anxious to display these powerful attractions to the greatest advantage; and the best rooms in the house, instead of being adorned with caricatures of dame Nature, in water-colors and needle-work, were always hung round with abundance of homespun garments, the manufacture and the property of the females,—a piece of laudable ostentation that still prevails among the heiresses of our Dutch villages.

The gentlemen, in fact, who figured in the circles of the gay world in these ancient times, corresponded, in most particulars, with the beauteous damsels whose smiles they were ambitious to deserve. True it is, their merits would make but a very inconsiderable impression upon the heart of a modern fair: they neither drove their curricles, nor sported their tandems, for as yet those gaudy vehicles were not even dreamt of; neither did they distinguish themselves by their brilliancy at the table, and their consequent rencontres with watchmen, for our forefathers were of too pacific a disposition to need those guardians of the night, every soul throughout the town being sound asleep before nine o'clock. Neither did they establish their claims to gentility at the expense of their tailors, for as yet those offenders against the pockets of society, and the tranquillity of all aspiring young gentlemen, were unknown in New Amsterdam; every good housewife made the clothes of her husband and family, and even the *goede vrouw* of Van Twiller himself thought it no disparagement to cut out her husband's linsey-woolsey galligaskins.

Not but what there were some two or three youngsters who manifested the first dawning of what is called fire and spirit; who held all labor in contempt; skulked about docks and market-places; loitered in the sunshine; squandered

7. *Low-Dutch*—a Hollander; not to be confused with Crèvecoeur's use of the word. 30. *curricles*—the smart New York vehicles of Irving's day were a light, two-wheeled carriage called the *curricle*, and the *tandem*, a two-wheeled vehicle drawn by two horses harnessed one before the other. 40. *galligaskins*—breeches.

what little money they could procure at hustle-cap and chuck-farthing; swore, boxed, fought cocks, and raced their neighbors' horses; in short, who promised to be the wonder, the talk, and abomination of the town, had not their stylish career been unfortunately cut short by an affair of honor with a whipping-post.

Far other, however, was the truly fashionable gentleman of those days: his dress, which served for both morning and evening, street and drawing-room, was a linsey-woolsey coat, made, perhaps, by the fair hands of the mistress of his affections, and gallantly bedecked with abundance of large brass buttons; half a score of breeches heightened the proportions of his figure; his shoes were decorated by enormous copper buckles; a low-crowned broad-rimmed hat over-shadowed his burly visage; and his hair dangled down his back in a prodigious queue of eel-skin.

Thus equipped, he would manfully sally forth, with pipe in mouth, to besiege some fair damsel's obdurate heart,—not such a pipe, good reader, as that which *Acis* did sweetly tune in praise of his *Galatea*, but one of true Delft manufacture, and furnished with a charge of fragrant tobacco. With this would he resolutely set himself down before the fortress, and rarely failed, in the process of time, to smoke the fair enemy into a surrender, upon honorable terms.

Such was the happy reign of *Wouter Van Twiller*, celebrated in many a long-forgotten song as the real golden age, the rest being nothing but counterfeit copper-washed coin. In that delightful period, a sweet and holy calm reigned over the whole province. The burgomaster smoked his pipe in peace; the substantial solace of his domestic cares, after her daily toils were done, sat soberly at the door, with her arms crossed over her apron of snowy white, without being insulted with ribald street-walkers or vagabond boys,—those unlucky urchins who do so infest our streets, displaying, under the roses of youth, the thorns and briars of iniquity. Then it was that the lover with ten breeches, and the damsel with petticoats of half a score, indulged in all the innocent endearments of virtuous love, without fear and without reproach; for what had that virtue to fear, which was defended by a shield of good linsey-woolseys, equal at least to the seven bull-hides of the invincible *Ajax*?

Ah, blissful and never to be forgotten age! when everything was better than it has ever been since, or ever will be again,—when *Buttermilk Channel* was quite dry at low water,—when the shad in the *Hudson* were all salmon,—and when the moon shone with a pure and resplendent whiteness, instead of that melancholy yellow light which is the consequence of her sickening at the abominations she every night witnesses in this degenerate city!

Happy would it have been for *New Amsterdam* could it always have existed in this state of blissful ignorance and lowly simplicity; but, alas! the days of childhood are too sweet to last! Cities, like men, grow out of them in time, and are doomed alike to grow into the bustle, the cares, and miseries of the world. Let no man congratulate himself, when he beholds the child of his

1. **hustle-cap**—a game in which coins are shaken in a cap before being tossed to the ground; **chuck-farthing**—a game in which coins are pitched at a mark, then chucked at a hole. 15. *Acis . . . Galatea*—See Virgil's third *Eclogue*. 31. *Ajax*—bravest, after Achilles, of the Greeks who besieged Troy. See Homer's *Iliad*, VII. 33. **Buttermilk Channel**—separating Governor's Island from Brooklyn.

bosom or the city of his birth increasing in magnitude and importance,—let the history of his own life teach him the dangers of the one, and this excellent little history of Manna-hata convince him of the calamities of the other.

## THE AUTHOR'S ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF

This expression of Irving's romantic tastes was prefixed to *The Sketch-Book* (1819-20). *Euphues* was published in 1578-80.

"I am of this mind with Homer, that as the snail that crept out of her shell was turned afterwards into a toad, and thereby was forced to make a stool to sit on; so the traveller that straggleth from his own country is in a short time transformed into so monstrous a shape, that he is faine to alter his mansion with his manners, and to live where he can, not where he would."

LYLY's *Euphues*

5 I was always fond of visiting new scenes, and observing strange characters and manners. Even when a mere child I began my travels, and made many tours of discovery into foreign parts and unknown regions of my native city, to the frequent alarm of my parents, and the <sup>keen or salient</sup> emolument of the town-crier. As I grew into boyhood, I extended the range of my observations. My holiday afternoons were spent in rambles about the surrounding country. I made myself  
10 familiar with all its places famous in history or fable. I knew every spot where a murder or robbery had been committed, or a ghost seen. I visited the neighboring villages, and added greatly to my stock of knowledge by noting their habits and customs, and conversing with their sages and great men. I even journeyed one long summer's day to the summit of the most distant hill,  
15 whence I stretched my eye over many a mile of terra incognita, and was astonished to find how vast a globe I inhabited.

This rambling propensity strengthened with my years. Books of voyages and travels became my passion, and in devouring their contents, I neglected the regular exercises of the school. How wistfully would I wander about the pier-  
20 heads in fine weather, and watch the parting ships, bound to distant climes—with what longing eyes would I gaze after their lessening sails, and wait myself in imagination to the ends of the earth!

Further reading and thinking, though they brought this vague inclination into more reasonable bounds, only served to make it more decided. I visited  
25 various parts of my own country; and had I been merely a lover of fine scenery, I should have felt little desire to seek elsewhere its gratification: for on no country have the charms of nature been more prodigally lavished. Her mighty lakes, like oceans of liquid silver; her mountains, with their bright aerial tints; her valleys, teeming with wild fertility; her tremendous cataracts, thundering  
30 in their solitudes; her boundless plains, waving with spontaneous <sup>abundant</sup> verdure; her broad deep rivers, rolling in solemn silence to the ocean; her trackless forests, where vegetation puts forth all its magnificence; her skies, kindling with the magic of summer clouds and glorious sunshine;—no, never need an American look beyond his own country for the sublime and beautiful of natural scenery.

15. terra incognita—unknown land.

But Europe held forth the charms of storied and poetical association. There were to be seen the masterpieces of art, the refinements of highly-cultivated society, the quaint peculiarities of ancient and local custom. My native country was full of youthful promise: Europe was rich in the accumulated treasures of age. Her very ruins told the history of times gone by, and every moldering stone was a chronicle. I longed to wander over the scenes of renowned achievement—to tread, as it were, in the footsteps of antiquity—to loiter about the ruined castle—to meditate on the falling tower—to escape, in short, from the commonplace realities of the present, and lose myself among the shadowy grandeurs of the past.

I had, besides all this, an earnest desire to see the great men of the earth. We have, it is true, our great men in America: not a city but has an ample share of them. I have mingled among them in my time, and have been almost withered by the shade into which they cast me; for there is nothing so baleful to a small man as the shade of a great one, particularly the great man of a city. But I was anxious to see the great men of Europe; for I had read in the works of various philosophers, that all animals degenerated in America, and man among the number. A great man of Europe, thought I, must therefore be as superior to a great man of America, as a peak of the Alps to a highland of the Hudson; and in this idea I was confirmed, by observing the comparative importance and swelling magnitude of many English travellers among us, who, I was assured, were very little people in their own country. I will visit this land of wonders, thought I, and see the gigantic race from which I am degenerated.

It has been either my good or evil lot to have my roving passion gratified. I have wandered through different countries, and witnessed many of the shifting scenes of life. I cannot say that I have studied them with the eye of a philosopher; but rather with the sauntering gaze with which humble lovers of the picturesque stroll from the window of one print-shop to another; caught sometimes by the delineations of beauty, sometimes by the distortions of caricature, and sometimes by the loveliness of landscape. As it is the fashion for modern tourists to travel pencil in hand, and bring their portfolios filled with sketches, I am disposed to get up a few for the entertainment of my friends. When, however, I look over the hints and memorandums I have taken down for the purpose, my heart almost fails me at finding how my idle humor has led me aside from the great objects studied by every regular traveller who would make a book. I fear I shall give equal disappointment with an unlucky landscape painter, who had travelled on the continent, but, following the bent of his vagrant inclination, had sketched in nooks, and corners, and by-places. His sketchbook was accordingly crowded with cottages, and landscapes, and obscure ruins; but he had neglected to paint St. Peter's, or the Coliseum; the cascade of Terni, or the bay of Naples; and had not a single glacier or volcano in his whole collection.

41-42. cascade of Terni—a series of waterfalls nearly six hundred feet in height in the Velionio River, Italy.

## ENGLISH WRITERS ON AMERICA

From *The Sketch-Book* (1819-20). In the *Edinburgh Review* for January, 1820, Sydney Smith asked, "In the four quarters of the globe, who ever reads an American book?" The patronizing attitude of foreign writers to America drew from Lowell in 1869 his well-known essay "On a Certain Condescension in Foreigners." Irving, through his urbanity and understanding, did much to break down the prejudices between the two countries after the War of 1812. The prefatory passage is from Milton's *Areopagitica*.

"Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation, rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: methinks I see her as an eagle, mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her endazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam."

MILTON ON THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS

IT is with feelings of deep regret that I observe the literary animosity daily growing up between England and America. Great curiosity has been awakened of late with respect to the United States, and the London press has teemed with volumes of travels through the Republic; but they seem intended  
5 to diffuse error rather than knowledge; and so successful have they been, that, notwithstanding the constant intercourse between the nations, there is no people concerning whom the great mass of the British public have less pure information or entertain more numerous prejudices.

English travelers are the best and the worst in the world. Where no motives  
10 of pride or interest intervene, none can equal them for profound and philosophical views of society, or faithful and graphical descriptions of external objects; but when either the interest or reputation of their own country comes in collision with that of another, they go to the opposite extreme, and forget their usual probity and candor, in the indulgence of splenetic remark, and an illiberal  
15 spirit of ridicule.

Hence, their travels are more honest and accurate, the more remote the country described. I would place implicit confidence in an Englishman's description of the regions beyond the cataracts of the Nile; of unknown islands in the Yellow Sea; of the interior of India; or of any other tract which other travellers  
20 might be apt to picture out with the illusions of their fancies; but I would cautiously receive his account of his immediate neighbors, and of those nations with which he is in habits of most frequent intercourse. However I might be disposed to trust his probity, I dare not trust his prejudices.

It has also been the peculiar lot of our country to be visited by the worst kind  
25 of English travelers. While men of philosophical spirit and cultivated minds have been sent from England to ransack the poles, to penetrate the deserts, and to study the manners and customs of barbarous nations, with which she can have no permanent intercourse of profit or pleasure; it has been left to the broken-down tradesman, the scheming adventurer, the wandering mechanic,  
30 the Manchester and Birmingham agent, to be her oracles respecting America.

30. Manchester . . . Birmingham agent—commercial traveler representing the rising manufacturing interests.

From such sources she is content to receive her information respecting a country in a singular state of moral and physical development; a country in which one of the greatest political experiments in the history of the world is now performing; and which presents the most profound and momentous studies to the statesman and the philosopher.

That such men should give prejudicial accounts of America is not a matter of surprise. The themes it offers for contemplation are too vast and elevated for their capacities. The national character is yet in a state of fermentation; it may have its frothiness and sediment, but its ingredients are sound and wholesome; it has already given proofs of powerful and generous qualities; and the whole promises to settle down into something substantially excellent. But the causes which are operating to strengthen and ennoble it, and its daily indication of admirable properties, are all lost upon these purblind observers; who are only affected by the little asperities incident to its present situation. They are capable of judging only of the surface of things; of those matters which come in contact with their private interests and personal gratifications. They miss some of the snug conveniences and petty comforts which belong to an old, highly-finished, and over-populous state of society; where the ranks of useful labor are crowded, and many earn a painful and servile subsistence by studying the very caprices of appetite and self-indulgence. These minor comforts, however, are all-important in the estimation of narrow minds; which either do not perceive, or will not acknowledge, that they are more than counterbalanced among us by great and generally diffused blessings.

They may, perhaps, have been disappointed in some unreasonable expectation of sudden gain. They may have pictured America to themselves an El Dorado, where gold and silver abounded, and the natives were lacking in sagacity; and where they were to become strangely and suddenly rich, in some unforeseen, but easy manner. The same weakness of mind that indulges absurd expectations produces petulance in disappointment. Such persons become embittered against the country on finding that there, as everywhere else, a man must sow before he can reap; must win wealth by industry and talent; and must contend with the common difficulties of nature, and the shrewdness of an intelligent and enterprising people.

Perhaps, through mistaken, or ill-directed hospitality, or from the prompt disposition to cheer and countenance the stranger, prevalent among my countrymen, they may have been treated with unwonted respect in America; and having been accustomed all their lives to consider themselves below the surface of good society, and brought up in a servile feeling of inferiority, they become arrogant on the common boon of civility: they attribute to the lowliness of others their own elevation; and underrate a society where there are no artificial distinctions, and where, by any chance, such individuals as themselves can rise to consequence.

One would suppose, however, that information coming from such sources, on a subject where the truth is so desirable, would be received with caution by the censors of the press; that the motives of these men, their veracity, their opportunities of inquiry and observation, and their capacities for judging correctly, would be rigorously scrutinized before their evidence was admitted, in



such sweeping extent, against a kindred nation. The very reverse, however, is the case, and it furnishes a striking instance of human inconsistency. Nothing can surpass the vigilance with which English critics will examine the credibility of the traveler who publishes an account of some distant, and comparatively  
5 unimportant, country. How warily will they compare the measurements of a pyramid, or the descriptions of a ruin; and how sternly will they censure any inaccuracy in these contributions of merely curious knowledge: while they will receive, with eagerness and unhesitating faith, the gross misrepresentations of coarse and obscure writers, concerning a country with which their own is  
10 placed in the most important and delicate relations. Nay, they will even make these apocryphal volumes text-books, on which to enlarge with a zeal and an ability worthy of a more generous cause.

I shall not, however, dwell on this irksome and hackneyed topic; nor should I have adverted to it, but for the undue interest apparently taken in it by my  
15 countrymen, and certain injurious effects which I apprehended it might produce upon the national feeling. We attach too much consequence to these attacks. They cannot do us any essential injury. The tissue of misrepresentations attempted to be woven round us are like cobwebs woven round the limbs of an infant giant. Our country continually outgrows them. One falsehood after  
20 another falls off of itself. We have but to live on, and every day we live a whole volume of refutation. All the writers of England united, if we could for a moment suppose their great minds stooping to so unworthy a combination, could not conceal our rapidly-growing importance, and matchless prosperity. They could not conceal that these are owing, not merely to physical and local,  
25 but also to moral causes—to the political liberty, the general diffusion of knowledge, the prevalence of sound moral and religious principles, which give force and sustained energy to the character of a people; and which, in fact, have been the acknowledged and wonderful supporters of their own national power and glory.

But why are we so exquisitely alive to the aspersions of England? Why do we suffer ourselves to be so affected by the contumely she has endeavored to cast upon us? It is not in the opinion of England alone that honor lives, and reputation has its being. The world at large is the arbiter of a nation's fame; with its thousand eyes it witnesses a nation's deeds, and from their collective  
35 testimony is national glory or national disgrace established.

For ourselves, therefore, it is comparatively of but little importance whether England does us justice or not; it is, perhaps, of far more importance to herself. She is instilling anger and resentment into the bosom of a youthful nation, to grow with its growth and strengthen with its strength. If in America, as  
40 some of her writers are laboring to convince her, she is hereafter to find an invidious rival, and a gigantic foe, she may thank those very writers for having provoked rivalry and irritated hostility. Every one knows the all-pervading influence of literature at the present day, and how much the opinions and passions of mankind are under its control. The mere contests of the sword are  
45 temporary; their wounds are but in the flesh, and it is the pride of the generous to forgive and forget them; but the slanders of the pen pierce to the heart; they rankle longest in the noblest spirits; they dwell ever present in the mind,

and render it morbidly sensitive to the most trifling collision. It is but seldom that any one overt act produces hostilities between two nations; there exists, most commonly, a previous jealousy and ill-will; a predisposition to take offence. Trace these to their cause, and how often will they be found to originate in the mischievous effusions of mercenary writers; who, secure in their closets, and for ignominious bread, concoct and circulate the venom that is to inflame the generous and the brave. 5

I am not laying too much stress upon this point; for it applies most emphatically to our particular case. Over no nation does the press hold a more absolute control than over the people of America; for the universal education of the poorest classes makes every individual a reader. There is nothing published in England on the subject of our country that does not circulate through every part of it. There is not a calumny dropped from English pen, nor an unworthy sarcasm uttered by an English statesman, that does not go to blight good-will, and add to the mass of latent resentment. Possessing, then, as England does, the fountain-head whence the literature of the language flows, how completely is it in her power, and how truly is it her duty, to make it the medium of amiable and magnanimous feeling—a stream where the two nations might meet together, and drink in peace and kindness. Should she, however, persist in turning it to waters of bitterness, the time may come when she may repent her folly. The present friendship of America may be of but little moment to her; but the future destinies of that country do not admit of a doubt; over those of England there lower some shadows of uncertainty. Should, then, a day of gloom arrive; should those reverses overtake her, from which the proudest empires have not been exempt; she may look back with regret at her infatuation, in repulsing from her side a nation she might have grappled to her bosom, and thus destroying her only chance for real friendship beyond the boundaries of her own dominions. 10 15 20 25

There is a general impression in England, that the people of the United States are inimical to the parent country. It is one of the errors which have been diligently propagated by designing writers. There is, doubtless, considerable political hostility, and a general soreness at the illiberality of the English press; but, generally speaking, the prepossessions of the people are strongly in favor of England. Indeed, at one time they amounted, in many parts of the Union, to an absurd degree of bigotry. The bare name of Englishman was a passport to the confidence and hospitality of every family, and too often gave a transient currency to the worthless and the ungrateful. Throughout the country there was something of enthusiasm connected with the idea of England. We looked to it with a hallowed feeling of tenderness and veneration, as the land of our forefathers—the august repository of the monuments and antiquities of our race—the birthplace and mausoleum of the sages and heroes of our paternal history. After our own country, there was none in whose glory we more delighted—none whose good opinion we were more anxious to possess—none toward which our hearts yearned with such throbings of warm consanguinity. Even during the late war, whenever there was the least 30 35 40 45

opportunity for kind feelings to spring forth, it was the delight of the generous spirits of our country to show that, in the midst of hostilities, they still kept alive the sparks of future friendship.

Is all this to be at an end? Is this golden band of kindred sympathies, so rare  
5 between nations, to be broken forever?—Perhaps it is for the best—it may dispel an illusion which might have kept us in mental vassalage; which might have interfered occasionally with our true interests, and prevented the growth of proper national pride. But it is hard to give up the kindred tie! and there are feelings dearer than interest—closer to the heart than pride—that will still  
10 make us cast back a look of regret, as we wander farther and farther from the paternal roof, and lament the waywardness of the parent that would repel the affections of the child.

Short-sighted and injudicious, however, as the conduct of England may be in this system of aspersion, recrimination on our part would be equally ill-  
15 judged. I speak not of a prompt and spirited vindication of our country, nor the keenest castigation of her slanderers—but I allude to a disposition to retaliate in kind; to retort sarcasm, and inspire prejudice; which seems to be spreading widely among our writers. Let us guard particularly against such a temper, for it would double the evil instead of redressing the wrong. Nothing  
20 is so easy and inviting as the retort of abuse and sarcasm; but it is a paltry and an unprofitable contest. It is the alternative of a morbid mind, fretted into petulance, rather than warmed into indignation. If England is willing to permit the mean jealousies of trade, or the rancorous animosities of politics, to deprave the integrity of her press, and poison the fountain of public opinion, let  
25 us beware of her example. She may deem it her interest to diffuse error, and engender antipathy, for the purpose of checking emigration; we have no purpose of the kind to serve. Neither have we any spirit of national jealousy to gratify, for as yet, in all our rivalships with England, we are the rising and the gaining party. There can be no end to answer, therefore, but the gratifica-  
30 tion of resentment—a mere spirit of retaliation; and even that is impotent. Our retorts are never republished in England; they fall short, therefore, of their aim; but they foster a querulous and peevish temper among our writers; they sour the sweet flow of our early literature, and sow thorns and brambles among its blossoms. What is still worse, they circulate through our own country, and,  
35 as far as they have effect, excite virulent national prejudices. This last is the evil most especially to be deprecated. Governed, as we are, entirely by public opinion, the utmost care should be taken to preserve the purity of the public mind. Knowledge is power, and truth is knowledge; whoever, therefore, knowingly propagates a prejudice, wilfully saps the foundation of his country's  
40 strength.

The members of a republic, above all other men, should be candid and dispassionate. They are, individually, portions of the sovereign mind and sovereign will, and should be enabled to come to all questions of national concern with calm and unbiased judgments. From the peculiar nature of our relations with  
45 England, we must have more frequent questions of a difficult and delicate character with her than with any other nation; questions that affect the most acute and excitable feelings; and as, in the adjustment of these, our national measures

must ultimately be determined by popular sentiment, we cannot be too anxiously attentive to purify it from all latent passion or prepossession.

Opening, too, as we do, an asylum for strangers from every portion of the earth, we should receive all with impartiality. It should be our pride to exhibit an example of one nation, at least, destitute of national antipathies, and exercising not merely the overt acts of hospitality, but those more rare and noble courtesies which spring from liberality of opinion. 5

What have we to do with national prejudices? They are the inveterate diseases of old countries, contracted in rude and ignorant ages, when nations knew but little of each other, and looked beyond their own boundaries with distrust and hostility. We, on the contrary, have sprung into national existence in an enlightened and philosophic age, when the different parts of the habitable world, and the various branches of the human family, have been indefatigably studied and made known to each other; and we forego the advantages of our birth, if we do not shake off the national prejudices, as we would the local superstitions of the old world. 10 15

But above all let us not be influenced by any angry feelings, so far as to shut our eyes to the perception of what is really excellent and amiable in the English character. We are a young people, necessarily an imitative one, and must take our examples and models, in a great degree, from the existing nations of Europe. There is no country more worthy of our study than England. The spirit of her constitution is most analogous to ours. The manners of her people—their intellectual activity—their freedom of opinion—their habits of thinking on those subjects which concern the dearest interests and most sacred charities of private life, are all congenial to the American character; and, in fact, are all intrinsically excellent; for it is in the moral feeling of the people that the deep foundations of British prosperity are laid; and however the superstructure may be timeworn, or overrun by abuses, there must be something solid in the basis, admirable in the materials, and stable in the structure of an edifice that so long has towered unshaken amidst the tempests of the world. 20 25 30

Let it be the pride of our writers, therefore, discarding all feelings of irritation, and disdaining to retaliate the illiberality of British authors, to speak of the English nation without prejudice, and with determined candor. While they rebuke the indiscriminating bigotry with which some of our countrymen admire and imitate everything English, merely because it is English, let them frankly point out what is really worthy of approbation. We may thus place England before us as a perpetual volume of reference, wherein are recorded sound deductions from ages of experience; and while we avoid the errors and absurdities which may have crept into the page, we may draw thence golden maxims of practical wisdom, wherewith to strengthen and to embellish our national character. 35 40

## RURAL LIFE IN ENGLAND

From *The Sketch-Book* (1819-20). Irving's long stay in England qualified him to speak with appreciation of English country life. The prefatory passage is from Cowper's *The Task*, Book III, which Irving slightly misquotes.

*Oh! friendly to the best pursuits of man,  
Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,  
Domestic life in rural pleasures past!*

COWPER

THE STRANGER who would form a correct opinion of the English character must not confine his observations to the metropolis. He must go forth into the country; he must sojourn in villages and hamlets; he must visit castles, villas, farm-houses, cottages; he must wander through parks  
5 and gardens; along hedges and green lanes; he must loiter about country churches; attend wakes and fairs, and other rural festivals; and cope with the people in all their conditions, and all their habits and humors.

In some countries the large cities absorb the wealth and fashion of the nation; they are the only fixed abodes of elegant and intelligent society, and the country  
10 is inhabited almost entirely by boorish peasantry. In England, on the contrary, the metropolis is a mere gathering-place, or general rendezvous, of the polite classes, where they devote a small portion of the year to a hurry of gayety and dissipation, and, having indulged this kind of carnival, return again to the apparently more congenial habits of rural life. The various orders of society are  
15 therefore diffused over the whole surface of the kingdom, and the most retired neighborhoods afford specimens of the different ranks.

The English, in fact, are strongly gifted with the rural feeling. They possess a quick sensibility to the beauties of nature, and a keen relish for the pleasures and employments of the country. This passion seems inherent in them. Even  
20 the inhabitants of cities, born and brought up among brick walls and bustling streets, enter with facility into rural habits, and evince a tact for rural occupation. The merchant has his snug retreat in the vicinity of the metropolis, where he often displays as much pride and zeal in the cultivation of his flower-garden, and the maturing of his fruits, as he does in the conduct of his business, and  
25 the success of a commercial enterprise. Even those less fortunate individuals, who are doomed to pass their lives in the midst of din and traffic, contrive to have something that shall remind them of the green aspect of nature. In the most dark and dingy quarters of the city, the drawing-room window resembles frequently a bank of flowers; every spot capable of vegetation has its grass-plot  
30 and flower-bed; and every square its mimic park, laid out with picturesque taste, and gleaming with refreshing verdure.

Those who see the Englishman only in town are apt to form an unfavorable opinion of his social character. He is either absorbed in business, or distracted by the thousand engagements that dissipate time, thought, and feeling, in this  
35 huge metropolis. He has, therefore, too commonly a look of hurry and abstraction. Wherever he happens to be, he is on the point of going somewhere else;

at the moment he is talking on one subject, his mind is wandering to another; and while paying a friendly visit, he is calculating how he shall economize time so as to pay the other visits allotted in the morning. An immense metropolis, like London, is calculated to make men selfish and uninteresting. In their casual and transient meetings, they can but deal briefly in commonplaces. They present but the cold superficies of character—its rich and genial qualities have no time to be warmed into a flow.

It is in the country that the Englishman gives scope to his natural feelings. He breaks loose gladly from the cold formalities and negatives civilities of town; throws off his habits of shy reserve, and becomes joyous and free-hearted. He manages to collect round him all the conveniences and elegancies of polite life, and to banish its restraints. His country-seat abounds with every requisite, either for studious retirement, tasteful gratification, or rural exercise. Books, paintings, music, horses, dogs, and sporting implements of all kinds, are at hand. He puts no constraint either upon his guests or himself, but in the true spirit of hospitality provides the means of enjoyment, and leaves every one to partake according to his inclination.

The taste of the English in the cultivation of land, and in what is called landscape gardening, is unrivalled. They have studied nature intently, and discover an exquisite sense of her beautiful forms and harmonious combinations. Those charms, which in other countries she lavishes in wild solitudes, are here assembled round the haunts of domestic life. They seem to have caught her coy and furtive graces, and spread them, like witchery, about their rural abodes.

Nothing can be more imposing than the magnificence of English park scenery. Vast lawns that extend like sheets of vivid green, with here and there clumps of gigantic trees, heaping up rich piles of foliage; the solemn pomp of groves and woodland glades, with the deer trooping in silent herds across them; the hare, bounding away to the covert; or the pheasant, suddenly bursting upon the wing; the brook, taught to wind in natural meanderings or expand into a glassy lake; the sequestered pool, reflecting the quivering trees, with the yellow leaf sleeping on its bosom, and the trout roaming fearlessly about its limpid waters; while some rustic temple or sylvan statue, grown green and dank with age, gives an air of classic sanctity to the seclusion.

These are but a few of the features of park scenery; but what most delights me, is the creative talent with which the English decorate the unostentatious abodes of middle life. The rudest habitation, the most unpromising and scanty portion of land, in the hands of an Englishman of taste, becomes a little paradise. With a nicely discriminating eye, he seizes at once upon its capabilities, and pictures in his mind the future landscape. The sterile spot grows into loveliness under his hand; and yet the operations of art which produce the effect are scarcely to be perceived. The cherishing and training of some trees; the cautious pruning of others; the nice distribution of flowers and plants of tender and graceful foliage; the introduction of a green slope of velvet turf; the partial opening to a peep of blue distance, or silver gleam of water: all these are managed with a delicate tact, a pervading yet quiet assiduity, like the magic touchings with which a painter finishes up a favorite picture.

The residence of people of fortune and refinement in the country has diffused a degree of taste and elegance in rural economy, that descends to the lowest class. The very laborer, with his thatched cottage and narrow slip of ground, attends to their embellishment. The trim hedge, the grass-plot before the door, the little flower-bed bordered with snug box, the woodbine trained up against the wall, and hanging its blossoms about the lattice, the pot of flowers in the window, the holly, providently planted about the house, to cheat winter of its dreariness, and to throw in a semblance of green summer to cheer the fire-side: all these bespeak the influence of taste, flowing down from high sources, and pervading the lowest levels of the public mind. If ever Love, as poets sing, delights to visit a cottage, it must be the cottage of an English peasant.

The fondness for rural life among the higher classes of the English has had a great and salutary effect upon the national character. I do not know a finer race of men than the English gentlemen. Instead of the softness and effeminacy which characterize the men of rank in most countries, they exhibit a union of elegance and strength, a robustness of frame and freshness of complexion, which I am inclined to attribute to their living so much in the open air, and pursuing so eagerly the invigorating recreations of the country. These hardy exercises produce also a healthful tone of mind and spirits, and a manliness and simplicity of manners, which even the follies and dissipations of the town cannot easily pervert, and can never entirely destroy. In the country, too, the different orders of society seem to approach more freely, to be more disposed to blend and operate favorably upon each other. The distinctions between them do not appear to be so marked and impassable as in the cities. The manner in which property has been distributed into small estates and farms has established a regular gradation from the nobleman, through the classes of gentry, small landed proprietors, and substantial farmers, down to the laboring peasantry; and while it has thus banded the extremes of society together, has infused into each intermediate rank a spirit of independence. This, it must be confessed, is not so universally the case at present as it was formerly; the larger estates having, in late years of distress, absorbed the smaller, and, in some parts of the country, almost annihilated the sturdy race of small farmers. These, however, I believe, are but casual breaks in the general system I have mentioned.

In rural occupation there is nothing mean and debasing. It leads a man forth among scenes of natural grandeur and beauty; it leaves him to the workings of his own mind, operated upon by the purest and most elevating of external influences. Such a man may be simple and rough, but he cannot be vulgar. The man of refinement, therefore, finds nothing revolting in an intercourse with the lower orders in rural life, as he does when he casually mingles with the lower orders of cities. He lays aside his distance and reserve, and is glad to waive the distinctions of rank, and to enter into the honest, heartfelt enjoyments of common life. Indeed the very amusements of the country bring men more and more together; and the sound of hound and horn blend all feelings into harmony. I believe this is one great reason why the nobility and gentry are more popular among the inferior orders in England than they are in any other country; and why the latter have endured so many excessive pressures

and extremities, without <sup>giving place to</sup> ~~repining~~ more generally at the unequal distribution of fortune and privilege.

To this mingling of cultivated and rustic society may also be attributed the rural feeling that runs through British literature; the frequent use of illustrations from rural life; those incomparable descriptions of nature that abound in the British poets, that have continued down from the "Flower and the Leaf" of Chaucer, and have brought into our closets all the freshness and fragrance of the dewy landscape. The pastoral writers of other countries appear as if they had paid nature an occasional visit, and become acquainted with her general charms; but the British poets have lived and <sup>been</sup> ~~revelled~~ with her—they have wooed her in her most secret haunts—they have watched her minutest caprices. A spray could not tremble in the breeze—a leaf could not rustle to the ground—a diamond-drop could not patter in the stream—a fragrance could not exhale from the humble violet, nor a daisy unfold its crimson tints to the morning, but it has been noticed by these impassioned and delicate observers, and wrought up into some beautiful morality.

The effect of this devotion of elegant minds to rural occupations has been wonderful on the face of the country. A great part of the island is rather level, and would be monotonous, were it not for the charms of culture: but it is studded and gemmed, as it were, with castles and palaces, and embroidered with parks and gardens. It does not abound in grand and sublime prospects, but rather in little home scenes of rural repose and sheltered quiet. Every antique farm-house and moss-grown cottage is a picture: and as the roads are continually winding, and the view is shut in by groves and hedges, the eye is delighted by a continual succession of small landscapes of captivating loveliness.

The great charm, however, of English scenery is the moral feeling that seems to pervade it. It is associated in the mind with ideas of order, of quiet, of sober well-established principles, of hoary usage and reverend custom. Every thing seems to be the growth of ages of regular and peaceful existence. The old church of remote architecture, with its low massive portal; its gothic tower; its windows rich with tracery and painted glass, in scrupulous preservation; its stately monuments of warriors and worthies of the olden time, ancestors of the present lords of the soil; its tombstones, recording successive generations of sturdy yeomanry, whose progeny still plough the same fields, and kneel at the same altar—the parsonage, a quaint irregular pile, partly antiquated, but repaired and altered in the tastes of various ages and occupants—the stile and footpath leading from the churchyard, across pleasant fields, and along shady hedge-rows, according to an immemorial right of way—the neighboring village, with its <sup>rendered sacred by religious associations</sup> ~~venerable~~ cottages, its public green sheltered by trees, under which the forefathers of the present race have sported—the antique family mansion, standing apart in some little rural domain, but looking down with a protecting air on the surrounding scene: all these common features of English landscape evince a calm and settled security, an hereditary transmission of homebred virtues and local attachments, that speak deeply and touchingly for the moral character of the nation.

7. Chaucer—Skeat has shown that this poem was written at a time later than Chaucer.



It is a pleasing sight of a Sunday morning, when the bell is sending its sober melody across the quiet fields, to behold the peasantry in their best finery, with ruddy faces and modest cheerfulness, thronging tranquilly along the green lanes to church; but it is still more pleasing to see them in the evenings, gathering about their cottage doors, and appearing to exult in the humble comforts and embellishments which their own hands have spread around them.

It is this sweet home-feeling, this settled repose of affection in the domestic scene, that is, after all, the parent of the steadiest virtues and purest enjoyments; and I cannot close these ~~desultory~~ remarks better, than by quoting the words of a modern English poet, who has depicted it with remarkable felicity:

Through each gradation, from the castled hall,  
The city dome, the villa crown'd with shade,  
But chief from modest mansions numberless,  
In town or hamlet, shelt'ring middle life,  
Down to the cottaged vale, and strawroof'd shed;  
This western isle hath long been famed for scenes  
Where bliss domestic finds a dwelling-place;  
Domestic bliss, that, like a harmless dove,  
(Honor and sweet endearment keeping guard,)  
Can center in a little quiet nest  
All that desire would fly for through the earth;  
That can, the world eluding, be itself  
A world enjoy'd; that wants no witnesses  
But its own sharers, and approving heaven;  
That, like a flower deep hid in rocky cleft,  
Smiles, though 'tis looking only at the sky.

## THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW

FOUND AMONG THE PAPERS OF THE LATE DIEDRICH KNICKERBOCKER

"The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" was included in *The Sketch-Book* (1819-1820).

*A pleasing land of drowsy head it was,  
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye,  
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,  
Forever flushing round a summer sky.*

Castle of Indolence \*

IN THE bosom of one of those spacious coves which indent the eastern shore of the Hudson, at that broad expansion of the river denominated by the ancient Dutch navigators the Tappan Zee, and where they always prudently shortened sail and implored the protection of St. Nicholas when they crossed, there lies a small market town or rural port, which by some is

12. **Through each**—From Rann Kennedy's poem on the death of Princess Charlotte of Wales, London, 1817.

27. **sky**—Irving appended a note to the first edition as follows: "From a Poem on the death of the Princess Charlotte, by the Reverend Rann Kennedy, A.M." 31. **St. Nicholas**—patron saint of children, and of sailors. Traditionally believed to have been bishop of Myra in Asia Minor and to have died 326 A.D.

\* Castle of Indolence, by James Thomson (1700-1748), an English poet, Bk. I, lines 46-40

called Greensburgh, but which is more generally and properly known by the name of Tarry Town. This name was given, we are told, in former days, by the good housewives of the adjacent country, from the inveterate propensity of their husbands to linger about the village tavern on market days. Be that as it may, I do not vouch for the fact, but merely advert to it, for the sake of being precise and authentic. Not far from this village, perhaps about two miles, there is a little valley or rather lap of land among high hills, which is one of the quietest places in the whole world. A small brook glides through it, with just murmur enough to lull one to repose; and the occasional whistle of a quail or tapping of a woodpecker is almost the only sound that ever breaks in upon the uniform tranquillity.

I recollect that, when a stripling, my first exploit in squirrel-shooting was in a grove of tall walnut-trees that shades one side of the valley. I had wandered into it at noontime, when all nature is peculiarly quiet, and was startled by the roar of my own gun, as it broke the Sabbath stillness around and was prolonged and reverberated by the angry echoes. If ever I should wish for a retreat whither I might steal from the world and its distractions, and dream quietly away the remnant of a troubled life, I know of none more promising than this little valley.

From the listless repose of the place, and the peculiar character of its inhabitants, who are descendants from the original Dutch settlers, this sequestered glen has long been known by the name of SLEEPY HOLLOW, and its rustic lads are called the Sleepy Hollow Boys throughout all the neighboring country. A drowsy, dreamy influence seems to hang over the land, and to pervade the very atmosphere. Some say that the place was bewitched by a High German doctor, during the early days of the settlement; others, that an old Indian chief, the prophet or wizard of his tribe, held his powwows there before the country was discovered by Master Hendrick Hudson. Certain it is, the place still continues under the sway of some witching power, that holds a spell over the minds of the good people, causing them to walk in a continual reverie. They are given to all kinds of marvellous beliefs; are subject to trances and visions, and frequently see strange sights, and hear music and voices in the air. The whole neighborhood abounds with local tales, haunted spots, and twilight superstitions, stars shoot and meteors glare oftener across the valley than in any other part of the country, and the nightmare, with her whole ninefold, seems to make it the favorite scene of her gambols.

The dominant spirit, however, that haunts this enchanted region, and seems to be commander-in-chief of all the powers of the air, is the apparition of a figure on horseback, without a head. It is said by some to be the ghost of a Hessian trooper, whose head had been carried away by a cannon-ball, in some nameless battle during the Revolutionary War, and who is ever and anon seen by the country folk hurrying along in the gloom of night, as if on the wings

16. *retreat*—Irving later acquired this property, named it Sunnyside, and spent his declining years here. 25. *High German*—a south German. 28. *Hendrick Hudson*—properly Henry Hudson (died 1611), who discovered the river in 1609 while seeking a northwest passage to India. 35. *nightmare*—from *King Lear*, Act III, scene iv, line 126. 38. *powers of the air*—Cf. Eph. 2: 2. 40. *Hessian trooper*—one of the mercenary soldiers from Hesse, Germany, hired by the British, of whom Franklin wrote (see pp. 122 ff.).

of the wind. His haunts are not confined to the valley, but extend at times to the adjacent roads, and especially to the vicinity of a church at no great distance. Indeed, certain of the most authentic historians of those parts, who have been careful in collecting and collating the floating facts concerning this spectre, allege that the body of the trooper having been buried in the churchyard, the ghost rides forth to the scene of battle in nightly quest of his head, and that the rushing speed with which he sometimes passes along the Hollow, like a midnight blast, is owing to his being belated, and in a hurry to get back to the churchyard before daybreak.

Such is the general purport of this legendary superstition, which has furnished materials for many a wild story in that region of shadows; and the spectre is known at all the country firesides, by the name of the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow.

It is remarkable that the visionary propensity I have mentioned is not confined to the native inhabitants of the valley, but is unconsciously imbibed by every one who resides there for a time. However wide awake they may have been before they entered that sleepy region, they are sure, in a little time, to inhale the witching influence of the air, and begin to grow imaginative, to dream dreams, and see apparitions.

I mention this peaceful spot with all possible laud; for it is in such little retired Dutch valleys, found here and there embosomed in the great State of New York, that population, manners, and customs remain fixed, while the great torrent of migration and improvement, which is making such incessant changes in other parts of this restless country, sweeps by them unobserved. They are like those little nooks of still water, which border a rapid stream, where we may see the straw and bubble riding quietly at anchor, or slowly revolving in their mimic harbor, undisturbed by the rush of the passing current. Though many years have elapsed since I trod the drowsy shades of Sleepy Hollow, yet I question whether I should not still find the same trees and the same families vegetating in its sheltered bosom.

In this by-place of nature there abode, in a remote period of American history, that is to say, some thirty years since, a worthy wight of the name of Ichabod Crane, who sojourned, or, as he expressed it, "tarried," in Sleepy Hollow, for the purpose of instructing the children of the vicinity. He was a native of Connecticut, a State which supplies the Union with pioneers for the mind as well as for the forest, and sends forth yearly its legions of frontier woodsmen and country schoolmasters. The cognomen of Crane was not inapplicable to his person. He was tall, but exceedingly lank, with narrow shoulders, long arms and legs, hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves, feet that might have served for shovels, and his whole frame most loosely hung together. His head was small, and flat at top, with huge ears, large green glassy eyes, and a long snipe nose, so that it looked like a weathercock perched upon his spindle neck to tell which way the wind blew. To see him striding along the profile of a hill on a windy day, with his clothes bagging and fluttering about him, one might have mistaken him for the genius of famine descending upon the earth, or some scarecrow eloped from a cornfield.

His schoolhouse was a low building of one large room, rudely constructed

of logs; the windows partly glazed, and partly patched with leaves of old copy-books. It was most ingeniously secured at vacant hours, by a withe twisted in the handle of the door, and stakes set against the window shutters; so that though a thief might get in with perfect ease, he would find some embarrassment in getting out—an idea most probably borrowed by the architect, Yost Van Houten, from the mystery of an eelpot. The schoolhouse stood in a rather lonely but pleasant situation, just at the foot of a woody hill, with a brook running close by, and a formidable birch-tree growing at one end of it. From hence the low murmur of his pupils' voices, conning over their lessons, might be heard in a drowsy summer's day, like the hum of a beehive; interrupted now and then by the authoritative voice of the master, in the tone of menace or command; or, peradventure, by the appalling sound of the birch, as he urged some tardy loiterer along the flowery path of knowledge. Truth to say, he was a conscientious man, and ever bore in mind the golden maxim, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." Ichabod Crane's scholars certainly were not spoiled.

I would not have it imagined, however, that he was one of those cruel potentates of the school who joy in the smart of their subjects; on the contrary, he administered justice with discrimination rather than severity; taking the burden off the backs of the weak, and laying it on those of the strong. Your mere puny stripling, that winced at the least flourish of the rod, was passed by with indulgence; but the claims of justice were satisfied by inflicting a double portion on some little tough, wrong-headed, broad-skirted Dutch urchin, who sulked and swelled and grew dogged and sullen beneath the birch. All this he called "doing his duty by their parents;" and he never inflicted a chastisement without following it by the assurance, so consolatory to the smarting urchin, that "he would remember it and thank him for it the longest day he had to live."

When school hours were over, he was even the companion and playmate of the larger boys; and on holiday afternoons would convoy some of the smaller ones home, who happened to have pretty sisters, or good housewives for mothers, noted for the comforts of the cupboard. Indeed, it behooved him to keep on good terms with his pupils. The revenue arising from his school was small, and would have been scarcely sufficient to furnish him with daily bread, for he was a huge feeder, and, though lank, had the dilating powers of an anaconda; but to help out his maintenance, he was, according to country custom in those parts, boarded and lodged at the houses of the farmers whose children he instructed. With these he lived successively a week at a time, thus going the rounds of the neighborhood, with all his worldly effects tied up in a cotton handkerchief.

That all this might not be too onerous on the purses of his rustic patrons, who are apt to consider the costs of schooling a grievous burden, and school-masters as mere drones, he had various ways of rendering himself both useful and agreeable. He assisted the farmers occasionally in the lighter labors of their farms, helped to make hay, mended the fences, took the horses to water, drove the cows from pasture, and cut wood for the winter fire. He laid aside, too, all

6. eelpot—a trap for catching eels; a funnel-shaped opening prevents their escape. 14. maxim—from Butler's *Hudibras*, Pt. II, Canto I.

the dominant dignity and absolute sway with which he lorded it in his little empire, the school, and became wonderfully gentle and ingratiating. He found favor in the eyes of the mothers by petting the children, particularly the youngest; and like the lion bold, which whilom so magnanimously the lamb  
 5 did hold, he would sit with a child on one knee, and rock a cradle with his foot for whole hours together.

In addition to his other vocations, he was the singing-master of the neighborhood, and picked up many bright shillings by instructing the young folks in psalmody. It was a matter of no little vanity to him on Sundays, to take his  
 10 station in front of the church gallery, with a band of chosen singers; where, in his own mind, he completely carried away the palm from the parson. Certain it is, his voice resounded far above all the rest of the congregation; and there are peculiar quavers still to be heard in that church, and which may even be  
 15 heard half a mile off, quite to the opposite side of the mill-pond, on a still Sunday morning, which are said to be legitimately descended from the nose of Ichabod Crane. Thus, by divers little makeshifts, in that ingenious way which is commonly denominated "by hook and by crook," the worthy pedagogue got on tolerably enough, and was thought, by all who understood nothing of the labor of headwork, to have a wonderfully easy life of it.

The schoolmaster is generally a man of some importance in the female circle of a rural neighborhood; being considered a kind of idle, gentlemanlike personage, of vastly superior taste and accomplishments to the rough country swains, and, indeed, inferior in learning only to the parson. His appearance, therefore, is apt to occasion some little stir at the tea-table of a farmhouse, and  
 20 the addition of a supernumerary dish of cakes or sweetmeats, or, peradventure, the parade of a silver teapot. Our man of letters, therefore, was peculiarly happy in the smiles of all the country damsels. How he would figure among them in the churchyard, between services on Sundays! gathering grapes for them from the wild vines that overran the surrounding trees; reciting for their amusement all the epitaphs on the tombstones; or sauntering, with a whole bevy of  
 30 them, along the banks of the adjacent mill-pond; while the more bashful country bumpkins hung sheepishly back, envying his superior elegance and address.

From his half-itinerant life, also, he was a kind of travelling gazette, carrying the whole budget of local gossip from house to house, so that his appearance  
 35 was always greeted with satisfaction. He was, moreover, esteemed by the women as a man of great erudition, for he had read several books quite through, and was a perfect master of Cotton Mather's "History of New England Witchcraft," in which, by the way, he most firmly and potently believed.

He was, in fact, an odd mixture of small shrewdness and simple credulity. His appetite for the marvellous, and his powers of digesting it, were equally  
 40 extraordinary; and both had been increased by his residence in this spell-bound

4. lion . . . lamb—from the *New England Primer*: "The lion bold the lamb doth hold."  
 38. Cotton Mather—(1663-1728) famous son of Increase Mather and, like his father, an intellectual leader of the New England Church. An ascetic and a mystic, he was in the forefront of the Salem trials, believing it his Christian duty to hunt down witches. Irving refers to his *Memorable Providences, Relating to Witchcrafts and Possessions* . . . 1689.

region. No tale was too gross or monstrous for his capacious swallow. It was often his delight, after his school was dismissed in the afternoon, to stretch himself\* on the rich bed of clover bordering the little brook that whimpered by his school-house, and there con over old Mather's direful tales, until the gathering dusk of evening made the printed page a mere mist before his eyes. Then, as he wended his way by swamp and stream and awful woodland, to the farmhouse where he happened to be quartered, every sound of nature, at that witching hour, fluttered his excited imagination,—the moan of the whip-poor-will from the hillside, the boding cry of the tree toad, that harbinger of storm, the dreary hooting of the screech owl, to the sudden rustling in the thicket of birds frightened from their roost. The fireflies, too, which sparkled most vividly in the darkest places, now and then startled him, as one of uncommon brightness would stream across his path; and if, by chance, a huge blockhead of a beetle came winging his blundering flight against him, the poor varlet was ready to give up the ghost, with the idea that he was struck with a witch's token. His only resource on such occasions, either to drown thought or drive away evil spirits, was to sing psalm tunes; and the good people of Sleepy Hollow, as they sat by their doors of an evening, were often filled with awe at hearing his nasal melody, "in link'd sweetness long drawn out," floating from the distant hill, or along the dusky road.

Another of his sources of fearful pleasure was to pass long winter evenings with the old Dutch wives, as they sat spinning by the fire, with a row of apples roasting and spluttering along the hearth, and listen to their marvellous tales of ghosts and goblins, and haunted fields, and haunted brooks, and haunted bridges, and haunted houses, and particularly of the headless horseman, or Galloping Hessian of the Hollow, as they sometimes called him. He would delight them equally by his anecdotes of witchcraft, and of the direful omens and portentous sights and sounds in the air, which prevailed in the earlier times of Connecticut; and would frighten them woefully with speculations upon comets and shooting stars; and with the alarming fact that the world did absolutely turn round, and that they were half the time topsy-turvy!

But if there was a pleasure in all this, while snugly cuddling in the chimney corner of a chamber that was all of a ruddy glow from the crackling wood fire, and where, of course, no spectre dared to show its face, it was dearly purchased by the terrors of his subsequent walk homewards. What fearful shapes and shadows beset his path, amidst the dim and ghastly glare of a snowy night! With what wistful look did he eye every trembling ray of light streaming across the waste fields from some distant window! How often was he appalled by some shrub covered with snow, which, like a sheeted spectre, beset his very path! How often did he shrink with curdling awe at the sound of his own steps on the frosty crust beneath his feet; and dread to look over his shoulder, lest he should behold some uncouth being tramping close behind him! and how often was he thrown into complete dismay by some rushing blast, howling among the trees, in the idea that it was the Galloping Hessian on one of his nightly scourgings!

19. *sweetness*—from Milton's "L'Allegro," line 140.

All these, however, were mere terrors of the night, phantoms of the mind that walk in darkness; and though he had seen many spectres in his time, and been more than once beset by Satan in divers shapes, in his lonely perambulations, yet daylight put an end to all these evils; and he would have passed a  
5 pleasant life of it, in spite of the Devil and all his works, if his path had not been crossed by a being that causes more perplexity to mortal man than ghosts, goblins, and the whole race of witches put together, and that was—a woman.

Among the musical disciples who assembled, one evening in each week, to receive his instructions in psalmody, was Katrina Van Tassel, the daughter and  
10 only child of a substantial Dutch farmer. She was a blooming lass of fresh eighteen; plump as a partridge; ripe and melting and rosy-cheeked as one of her father's peaches, and universally famed, not merely for her beauty, but her vast expectations. She was withal a little of a coquette, as might be perceived even in her dress, which was a mixture of ancient and modern fashions, as  
15 most suited to set off her charms. She wore the ornaments of pure yellow gold, which her great-great-grandmother had brought over from Saardam; the tempting stomacher of the olden time, and withal a provokingly short petticoat, to display the prettiest foot and ankle in the country round.

Ichabod Crane had a soft and foolish heart towards the sex; and it is not  
20 to be wondered at, that so tempting a morsel soon found favor in his eyes, more especially after he had visited her in her paternal mansion. Old Baltus Van Tassel was a perfect picture of a thriving, contented, liberal-hearted farmer. He seldom, it is true, sent either his eyes or his thoughts beyond the boundaries of his own farm; but within those everything was snug, happy and  
25 well-conditioned. He was satisfied with his wealth, but not proud of it; and piqued himself upon the hearty abundance, rather than the style in which he lived. His stronghold was situated on the banks of the Hudson, in one of those green, sheltered, fertile nooks in which the Dutch farmers are so fond of nestling. A great elm tree spread its broad branches over it, at the foot of which  
30 bubbled up a spring of the softest and sweetest water, in a little well formed of a barrel; and then stole sparkling away through the grass, to a neighboring brook, that babbled along among alders and dwarf willows. Hard by the farmhouse was a vast barn, that might have served for a church: every window and crevice of which seemed bursting forth with the treasures of the farm;  
35 the flail was busily resounding within it from morning to night; swallows and martins skimmed twittering about the eaves; and rows of pigeons, some with one eye turned up, as if watching the weather, some with their heads under their wings or buried in their bosoms, and others swelling, and cooing, and bowing about their dames, were enjoying the sunshine on the roof. Sleek unwieldy porkers were grunting in the repose and abundance of their pens, from whence sallied forth, now and then, troops of sucking pigs, as if to snuff the air. A stately squadron of snowy geese were riding in an adjoining pond, conveying whole fleets of ducks; regiments of turkeys were gobbling through the farmyard, and Guinea fowls fretting about it, like ill-tempered housewives, with  
45 their peevish, discontented cry. Before the barn door strutted the gallant cock,

16. Saardam—a town near Amsterdam in Holland.

that pattern of a husband, a warrior and a fine gentleman, clapping his burnished wings and crowing in the pride and gladness of his heart,—sometimes tearing up the earth with his feet, and then generously calling his ever-hungry family of wives and children to enjoy the rich morsel which he had discovered.

5

The pedagogue's mouth watered as he looked upon this sumptuous promise of luxurious winter fare. In his devouring mind's eye, he pictured to himself every roasting-pig running about with a pudding in his belly, and an apple in his mouth; the pigeons were snugly put to bed in a comfortable pie, and tucked in with a coverlet of crust; the geese were swimming in their own 10 gravy; and the ducks pairing cosily in dishes, like snug married couples, with a decent competency of onion sauce. In the porkers he saw carved out the future sleek side of bacon, and juicy relishing ham; not a turkey but he beheld daintily trussed up, with its gizzard under its wing, and, peradventure, a neck-lace of savory sausages; and even bright chanticleer himself lay sprawling on 15 his back, in a side dish, with uplifted claws, as if craving that quarter which his chivalrous spirit disdained to ask while living.

As the enraptured Ichabod fancied all this, and as he rolled his great green eyes over the fat meadow lands, the rich fields of wheat, of rye, of buckwheat, and Indian corn, and the orchards burdened with ruddy fruit, which sur- 20 rounded the warm tenement of Van Tassel, his heart yearned after the damsel who was to inherit these domains, and his imagination expanded with the idea, how they might be readily turned into cash, and the money invested in immense tracts of wild land, and shingle palaces in the wilderness. Nay, his busy fancy already realized his hopes, and presented to him the blooming 25 Katrina, with a whole family of children, mounted on the top of a wagon loaded with household trumpery, with pots and kettles dangling beneath; and he beheld himself, striding a pacing mare, with a colt at her heels, setting out for Kentucky, Tennessee,—or the Lord knows where!

When he entered the house, the conquest of his heart was complete. It was 30 one of those spacious farmhouses, with high-ridged but lowly sloping roofs, built in the style handed down from the first Dutch settlers; the low projecting eaves forming a piazza along the front, capable of being closed up in bad weather. Under this were hung flails, harness, various utensils of husbandry, and nets for fishing in the neighboring river. Benches were built along the sides for 35 summer use; and a great spinning-wheel at one end, and a churn at the other, showed the various uses to which this important porch might be devoted. From the piazza the wondering Ichabod entered the hall, which formed the centre of the mansion, and the place of usual residence. Here rows of re- 40 splendent pewter, ranged on a long dresser, dazzled his eyes. In one corner stood a huge bag of wool, ready to be spun; in another, a quantity of linsey-woolsey just from the loom; ears of Indian corn, and strings of dried apples and peaches, hung in gay festoons along the walls, mingled with the gaud of red peppers; and a door left ajar gave him a peep into the best parlor, where the claw-footed chairs and dark mahogany tables shone like mirrors; 45



andirons, with their accompanying shovel and tongs, glistened from their covert of asparagus tops; mock-oranges and conch-shells decorated the mantel-piece; strings of various-colored birds' eggs were suspended above it; a great ostrich egg was hung from the centre of the room, and a corner cupboard, 5 knowingly left open, displayed immense treasures of old silver and well-mended china.

From the moment Ichabod laid his eyes upon these regions of delight, the peace of his mind was at an end, and his only study was how to gain the affections of the peerless daughter of Van Tassel. In this enterprise, however, 10 he had more real difficulties than generally fell to the lot of a knight-errant of yore, who seldom had anything but giants, enchanters, fiery dragons, and such like easily conquered adversaries, to contend with; and had to make his way merely through gates of iron and brass, and walls of adamant to the castle keep, where the lady of his heart was confined; all which he achieved 15 as easily as a man would carve his way to the centre of a Christmas pie; and then the lady gave him her hand as a matter of course. Ichabod, on the contrary, had to win his way to the heart of a country coquette, beset with a labyrinth of whims and caprices, which were forever presenting new difficulties and impediments; and he had to encounter a host of fearful adversaries of 20 real flesh and blood, the numerous rustic admirers, who beset every portal to her heart, keeping a watchful and angry eye upon each other, but ready to fly out in the common cause against any new competitor.

Among these, the most formidable was a burly, roaring, roystering blade, of the name of Abraham, or, according to the Dutch abbreviation, Brom Van 25 Brunt, the hero of the country round, which rang with his feats of strength and hardihood. He was broad-shouldered and double-jointed, with short curly black hair, and a bluff but not unpleasant countenance, having a mingled air of fun and arrogance. From his Herculean frame and great powers of limb, he had received the nickname of BROM BONES, by which he was universally 30 known. He was famed for great knowledge and skill in horsemanship, being as dexterous on horseback as a Tartar. He was foremost at all races and cock-fights; and, with the ascendancy which bodily strength always acquires in rustic life, was the umpire in all disputes, setting his hat on one side, and giving his decisions with an air and tone that admitted of no gainsay or 35 appeal. He was always ready for either a fight or a frolic; but had more mischief than ill-will in his composition; and with all his overbearing roughness, there was a strong dash of waggish good humor at bottom. He had three or four boon companions, who regarded him as their model, and at the head of whom he scoured the country, attending every scene of feud or merriment 40 for miles round. In cold weather he was distinguished by a fur cap, surmounted with a flaunting fox's tail; and when the folks at a country gathering descried this well-known crest at a distance, whisking about among a squad of hard riders, they always stood by for a squall. Sometimes his crew would be heard dashing along past the farmhouses at midnight, with whoop and halloo, 45 like a troop of Don Cossacks; and the old dames, startled out of their sleep,

45. Don Cossacks—Russian horsemen from the River Don.

would listen for a moment till the hurry-scurry had clattered by, and then exclaim, "Ay, there goes Brom Bones and his gang!" The neighbors looked upon him with a mixture of awe, admiration, and good-will; and, when any madcap prank or rustic brawl occurred in the vicinity, always shook their heads, and warranted Brom Bones was at the bottom of it.

This rantipole hero had for some time singled out the blooming Katrina for the object of his uncouth gallantries, and though his amorous toyings were something like the gentle caresses and endearments of a bear, yet it was whispered that she did not altogether discourage his hopes. Certain it is, his advances were signals for rival candidates to retire, who felt no inclination to cross a lion in his amours; insomuch, that when his horse was seen tied to Van Tassel's paling, on a Sunday night, a sure sign that his master was courting, or, as it is termed, "sparking," within, all other suitors passed by in despair, and carried the war into other quarters.

Such was the formidable rival with whom Ichabod Crane had to contend, and, considering all things, a stouter man than he would have shrunk from the competition, and a wiser man would have despaired. He had, however, a happy mixture of pliability and perseverance in his nature; he was in form and spirit like a supple-jack—yielding, but tough; though he bent, he never broke; and though he bowed beneath the slightest pressure, yet, the moment it was away—jerk!—he was as erect, and carried his head as high as ever.

To have taken the field openly against his rival would have been madness; for he was not a man to be thwarted in his amours, any more than that stormy lover, Achilles. Ichabod, therefore, made his advances in a quiet and gently insinuating manner. Under cover of his character of singing-master, he made frequent visits at the farmhouse; not that he had anything to apprehend from the meddlesome interference of parents, which is so often a stumbling-block in the path of lovers. Balt Van Tassel was an easy, indulgent soul; he loved his daughter better even than his pipe, and, like a reasonable man and an excellent father, let her have her way in everything. His notable little wife, too, had enough to do to attend to her housekeeping and manage her poultry; for, as she sagely observed, ducks and geese are foolish things, and must be looked after, but girls can take care of themselves. Thus, while the busy dame bustled about the house, or plied her spinning-wheel at one end of the piazza, honest Balt would sit smoking his evening pipe at the other, watching the achievements of a little wooden warrior, who, armed with a sword in each hand, was most valiantly fighting the wind on the pinnacle of the barn. In the mean time, Ichabod would carry on his suit with the daughter by the side of the spring under the great elm, or sauntering along in the twilight, that hour so favorable to the lover's eloquence.

I profess not to know how women's hearts are wooed and won. To me they have always been matters of riddle and admiration. Some seem to have but one vulnerable point, or door of access; while others have a thousand avenues, and may be captured in a thousand different ways. It is a great triumph of skill to gain the former, but a still greater proof of generalship to maintain possession

of the latter, for a man must battle for his fortress at every door and window. He who wins a thousand common hearts is therefore entitled to some renown; but he who keeps undisputed sway over the heart of a coquette is indeed a hero. Certain it is, this was not the case with the redoubtable Brom Bones; and  
5 from the moment Ichabod Crane made his advances, the interests of the former evidently declined: his horse was no longer seen tied to the palings on Sunday nights, and a deadly feud gradually arose between him and the preceptor of Sleepy Hollow.

Brom, who had a degree of rough chivalry in his nature, would fain have  
10 carried matters to open warfare and have settled their pretensions to the lady, according to the mode of those most concise and simple reasoners, the knights-errant of yore,—by single combat; but Ichabod was too conscious of the superior might of his adversary to enter the lists against him; he had overheard a boast of Bones, that he would “double the schoolmaster up, and lay  
15 him on a shelf of his own schoolhouse;” and he was too wary to give him an opportunity. There was something extremely provoking in this obstinately pacific system; it left Brom no alternative but to draw upon the funds of rustic waggery in his disposition, and to play off boorish practical jokes upon his rival. Ichabod became the object of whimsical persecution to Bones and his  
20 gang of rough riders. They harried his hitherto peaceful domains, smoked out his singing-school by stopping up the chimney, broke into the schoolhouse at night, in spite of its formidable fastenings of withe and window stakes, and turned everything topsy-turvy, so that the poor schoolmaster began to think all the witches in the country held their meetings there. But what was still  
25 more annoying, Brom took all opportunities of turning him into ridicule in presence of his mistress, and had a scoundrel dog whom he taught to whine in the most ridiculous manner, and introduced as a rival of Ichabod’s, to instruct her in psalmody.

In this way matters went on for some time, without producing any material  
30 effect on the relative situations of the contending powers. On a fine autumnal afternoon, Ichabod, in pensive mood, sat enthroned on the lofty stool from whence he usually watched all the concerns of his little literary realm. In his hand he swayed a ferule, that sceptre of despotic power; the birch of justice reposed on three nails behind the throne, a constant terror to evil doers; while  
35 on the desk before him might be seen sundry contraband articles and prohibited weapons, detected upon the persons of idle urchins, such as half-munched apples, popguns, whirligigs, fly-cages, and whole legions of rampant little paper game-cocks. Apparently there had been some appalling act of justice recently inflicted, for his scholars were all busily intent upon their books, or slyly  
40 whispering behind them with one eye kept upon the master; and a kind of buzzing stillness reigned throughout the schoolroom. It was suddenly interrupted by the appearance of a negro in tow-cloth jacket and trousers, a round-crowned fragment of a hat, like the cap of Mercury, and mounted on the back of a ragged, wild, half-broken colt, which he managed with a rope  
45 by way of halter. He came clattering up to the school-door with an invitation to Ichabod to attend a merry-making or “quilting-frolic,” to be held that evening at Mynheer Van Tassel’s; and having delivered his message with that

air of importance and effort at fine language which a negro is apt to display on petty embassies of the kind, he dashed over the brook, and was seen scampering away up the Hollow, full of the importance and hurry of his mission.

All was now bustle and hubbub in the late quiet schoolroom. The scholars were hurried through their lessons without stopping at trifles; those who were nimble skipped over half with impunity, and those who were tardy had a smart application now and then in the rear, to quicken their speed or help them over a tall word. Books were flung aside without being put away on the shelves, inkstands were overturned, benches thrown down, and the whole school was turned loose an hour before the usual time, bursting forth like a legion of young imps, yelping and racketing about the green in joy at their early emancipation. 5 10

The gallant Ichabod now spent at least an extra half hour at his toilet, brushing and furbishing up his best, and indeed only suit of rusty black, and arranging his locks by a bit of broken looking-glass that hung up in the school-house. That he might make his appearance before his mistress in the true style of a cavalier, he borrowed a horse from the farmer with whom he was domiciliated, a choleric old Dutchman by the name of Hans Van Ripper, and, thus gallantly mounted, issued forth like a knight-errant in quest of adventures. But it is meet I should, in the true spirit of romantic story, give some account of the looks and equipments of my hero and his steed. The animal he bestrode was a broken-down plow-horse, that had outlived almost everything but its viciousness. He was gaunt and shagged, with a ewe neck, and a head like a hammer; his rusty mane and tail were tangled and knotted with burs; one eye had lost its pupil, and was glaring and spectral, but the other had a gleam of a genuine devil in it. Still he must have had fire and mettle in his day, if we may judge from the name he bore of Gunpowder. He had, in fact, been a favorite steed of his master's, the choleric Van Ripper, who was a furious rider, and had infused, very probably, some of his own spirit into the animal; for, old and broken-down as he looked, there was more of the lurking devil in him than in any young filly in the country. 15 20 25 30

Ichabod was a suitable figure for such a steed. He rode with short stirrups, which brought his knees nearly up to the pommel of the saddle; his sharp elbows stuck out like grasshoppers'; he carried his whip perpendicularly in his hand, like a sceptre, and as his horse jogged on, the motion of his arms was not unlike the flapping of a pair of wings. A small wool hat rested on the top of his nose, for so his scanty strip of forehead might be called, and the skirts of his black coat fluttered out almost to the horse's tail. Such was the appearance of Ichabod and his steed as they shambled out of the gate of Hans Van Ripper, and it was altogether such an apparition as is seldom to be met with in broad daylight. 35 40

It was, as I have said, a fine autumnal day; the sky was clear and serene, and nature wore that rich and golden livery which we always associate with the idea of abundance. The forests had put on their sober brown and yellow, while some trees of the tenderer kind had been nipped by the frosts into brilliant dyes of orange, purple, and scarlet. Streaming files of wild ducks began to make their appearance high in the air; the bark of the squirrel might be 45

heard from the groves of beech and hickory-nuts, and the pensive whistle of the quail at intervals from the neighboring stubble field.

The small birds were taking their farewell banquets. In the fullness of their revelry, they fluttered, chirping and frolicking from bush to bush, and tree to tree, capricious from the very profusion and variety around them. There was the honest cockrobin, the favorite game of stripling sportsmen, with its loud querulous note; and the twittering blackbirds flying in sable clouds; and the golden-winged woodpecker, with his crimson crest, his broad black gorget, and splendid plumage; and the cedar-bird, with its red-tipt wings and yellow-tipt tail and its little monteiro cap of feathers; and the blue jay, that noisy coxcomb in his gay light blue coat and white underclothes, screaming and chattering, nodding and bobbing and bowing, and pretending to be on good terms with every songster of the grove.

As Ichabod jogged slowly on his way, his eye, ever open to every symptom of culinary abundance, ranged with delight over the treasures of jolly autumn. On all sides he beheld vast store of apples: some hanging in oppressive opulence on the trees; some gathered into baskets and barrels for the market; others heaped up in rich piles for the cider-press. Farther on he beheld great fields of Indian corn, with its golden ears peeping from their leafy coverts, and holding out the promise of cakes and hasty-pudding; and the yellow pumpkins lying beneath them, turning up their fair round bellies to the sun, and giving ample prospects of the most luxurious of pies; and anon he passed the fragrant buckwheat fields breathing the odor of the beehive, and as he beheld them, soft anticipations stole over his mind of dainty slap-jacks, well buttered, and garnished with honey or treacle, by the delicate little dimpled hand of Katrina Van Tassel.

Thus feeding his mind with many sweet thoughts and "sugared suppositions," he journeyed along the sides of a range of hills which look out upon some of the goodliest scenes of the mighty Hudson. The sun gradually wheeled his broad disk down in the west. The wide bosom of the Tappan Zee lay motionless and glassy, excepting that here and there a gentle undulation waved and prolonged the blue shadow of the distant mountain. A few amber clouds floated in the sky, without a breath of air to move them. The horizon was of a fine golden tint, changing gradually into a pure apple green, and from that into the deep blue of the mid-heaven. A slanting ray lingered on the woody crests of the precipices that overhung some parts of the river, giving greater depth to the dark gray and purple of their rocky sides. A sloop was loitering in the distance, dropping slowly down with the tide, her sail hanging uselessly against the mast; and as the reflection of the sky gleamed along the still water, it seemed as if the vessel was suspended in the air.

It was toward evening that Ichabod arrived at the castle of the Heer Van Tassel, which he found thronged with the pride and flower of the adjacent country. Old farmers, a spare leathern-faced race, in homespun coats and breeches, blue stockings, huge shoes, and magnificent pewter buckles. Their brisk, withered little dames, in close crimped caps, long-waisted short-gowns,

10. monteiro—a huntsman's cap with flaps to cover the ears. (Usually spelled montero.)

homespun petticoats, with scissors and pin-cushions, and gay calico pockets hanging on the outside. Buxom lasses, almost as antiquated as their mothers, excepting where a straw hat, a fine ribbon, or perhaps a white frock, gave symptoms of city innovation. The sons, in short square-skirted coats, with rows of stupendous brass buttons, and their hair generally queued in the fashion of the times, especially if they could procure an eelskin for the purpose, it being esteemed throughout the country as a potent nourisher and strengthener of the hair. 5

Brom Bones, however, was the hero of the scene, having come to the gathering on his favorite steed Daredevil, a creature, like himself, full of mettle and mischief, and which no one but himself could manage. He was, in fact, noted for preferring vicious animals, given to all kinds of tricks which kept the rider in constant risk of his neck, for he held a tractable, well-broken horse as unworthy of a lad of spirit. 10

Fain would I pause to dwell upon the world of charms that burst upon the enraptured gaze of my hero, as he entered the state parlor of Van Tassel's mansion. Not those of the bevy of buxom lasses, with their luxurious display of red and white; but the ample charms of a genuine Dutch country tea-table, in the sumptuous time of autumn. Such heaped-up platters of cakes of various and almost indescribable kinds, known only to experienced Dutch housewives! 15  
There was the doughty doughnut, the tender olykoek, and the crisp and crumbling cruller; sweet cakes and short cakes, ginger cakes and honey cakes, and the whole family of cakes. And then there were apple pies, and peach pies, and pumpkin pies; besides slices of ham and smoked beef; and moreover delectable dishes of preserved plums, and peaches, and pears, and quinces; not to mention 20  
broiled shad and roasted chickens; together with bowls of milk and cream, all mingled higgledy-piggledy, pretty much as I have enumerated them, with the motherly teapot sending up its clouds of vapor from the midst—Heaven bless the mark! I want breath and time to discuss this banquet as it deserves, and am too eager to get on with my story. Happily, Ichabod Crane was not in 30  
so great a hurry as his historian, but did ample justice to every dainty.

He was a kind and thankful creature, whose heart dilated in proportion as his skin was filled with good cheer, and whose spirits rose with eating, as some men's do with drink. He could not help, too, rolling his large eyes round him as he ate, and chuckling with the possibility that he might one day be lord of all this scene of almost unimaginable luxury and splendor. Then, he thought, how soon he'd turn his back upon the old school-house; snap his fingers in the face of Hans Van Ripper, and every other niggardly patron, and kick any itinerant pedagogue out of doors that should dare to call him comrade! 35

Old Baltus Van Tassel moved about among his guests with a face dilated with content and good-humor, round and jolly as the harvest moon. His hospitable attentions were brief, but expressive, being confined to a shake of the hand, a slap on the shoulder, a loud laugh, and a pressing invitation to "fall to, and help themselves." 40

And now the sound of the music from the common room, or hall, summoned 45

21. *olykoek*—a cake fried in lard, a cruller or doughnut.

to the dance. The musician was an old gray-headed negro, who had been the itinerant orchestra of the neighborhood for more than half a century. His instrument was as old and battered as himself. The greater part of the time he scraped on two or three strings, accompanying every movement of the bow with a motion of the head; bowing almost to the ground, and stamping with his foot whenever a fresh couple were to start.

Ichabod prided himself upon his dancing as much as upon his vocal powers. Not a limb, not a fibre about him was idle; and to have seen his loosely hung frame in full motion, and clattering about the room, you would have thought St. Vitus himself, that blessed patron of the dance, was figuring before you in person. He was the admiration of all the negroes; who, having gathered, of all ages and sizes, from the farm and the neighborhood, stood forming a pyramid of shining black faces at every door and window; gazing with delight at the scene; rolling their white eye-balls, and showing grinning rows of ivory from ear to ear. How could the flogger of urchins be otherwise than animated and joyous? the lady of his heart was his partner in the dance, and smiling graciously in reply to all his amorous oglings; while Brom Bones, sorely smitten with love and jealousy, sat brooding by himself in one corner.

When the dance was at an end, Ichabod was attracted to a knot of the sager folks, who, with Old Van Tassel, sat smoking at one end of the piazza, gossiping over former times, and drawing out long stories about the war.

This neighborhood, at the time of which I am speaking, was one of those highly favored places which abound with chronicle and great men. The British and American line had run near it during the war; it had, therefore, been the scene of marauding, and infested with refugees, cow-boys, and all kinds of border chivalry. Just sufficient time had elapsed to enable each story-teller to dress up his tale with a little becoming fiction, and, in the indistinctness of his recollection, to make himself the hero of every exploit.

There was the story of Doffue Martling, a large blue-bearded Dutchman, who had nearly taken a British frigate with an old iron nine-pounder from a mud breastwork, only that his gun burst at the sixth discharge. And there was an old gentleman who shall be nameless, being too rich a mynheer to be lightly mentioned, who, in the battle of White Plains, being an excellent master of defence, parried a musket-ball with a small-sword, insomuch that he absolutely felt it whiz round the blade, and glance off at the hilt; in proof of which he was ready at any time to show the sword, with the hilt a little bent. There were several more that had been equally great in the field, not one of whom but was persuaded that he had a considerable hand in bringing the war to a happy termination.

But all these were nothing to the tales of ghosts and apparitions that succeeded. The neighborhood is rich in legendary treasures of the kind. Local tales and superstitions thrive best in these sheltered, long-settled retreats; but are trampled under foot by the shifting throng that forms the population of most of our country places. Besides, there is no encouragement for ghosts in

25. **cow-boys**—Tory partisans in Westchester County during the Revolution were so called. 32. **mynheer**—my lord; here, Dutchman. 33. **White Plains**—where General Howe defeated Washington Oct. 28, 1776. 34. **small-sword**—ornamental sword.

most of our villages, for they have scarcely had time to finish their first nap and turn themselves in their graves, before their surviving friends have travelled away from the neighborhood; so that when they turn out at night to walk their rounds, they have no acquaintance left to call upon. This is perhaps the reason why we so seldom hear of ghosts except in our long-established Dutch communities. 5

The immediate cause, however, of the prevalence of supernatural stories in these parts, was doubtless owing to the vicinity of Sleepy Hollow. There was a contagion in the very air that blew from that haunted region; it breathed forth an atmosphere of dreams and fancies infecting all the land. Several of the Sleepy Hollow people were present at Van Tassel's, and, as usual, were doling out their wild and wonderful legends. Many dismal tales were told about funeral trains, and mourning cries and wailings heard and seen about the great tree where the unfortunate Major André was taken, and which stood in the neighborhood. Some mention was made also of the woman in white, that haunted the dark glen at Raven Rock, and was often heard to shriek on winter nights before a storm, having perished there in the snow. The chief part of the stories, however, turned upon the favorite spectre of Sleepy Hollow, the Headless Horseman, who had been heard several times of late, patrolling the country; and, it was said, tethered his horse nightly among the graves in the churchyard. 10 15 20

The sequestered situation of this church seems always to have made it a favorite haunt of troubled spirits. It stands on a knoll, surrounded by locust-trees and lofty elms, from among which its decent whitewashed walls shine modestly forth, like Christian purity beaming through the shades of retirement. A gentle slope descends from it to a silver sheet of water, bordered by high trees, between which, peeps may be caught at the blue hills of the Hudson. To look upon its grass-grown yard, where the sunbeams seem to sleep so quietly, one would think that there at least the dead might rest in peace. On one side of the church extends a wide woody dell, along which raves a large brook among broken rocks and trunks of fallen trees. Over a deep black part of the stream, not far from the church, was formerly thrown a wooden bridge; the road that led to it, and the bridge itself, were thickly shaded by overhanging trees, which cast a gloom about it, even in the daytime; but occasioned a fearful darkness at night. Such was one of the favorite haunts of the Headless Horseman, and the place where he was most frequently encountered. The tale was told of old Brouwer, a most heretical disbeliever in ghosts, how he met the Horseman returning from his foray into Sleepy Hollow, and was obliged to get up behind him; how they galloped over bush and brake, over hill and swamp, until they reached the bridge; when the Horseman suddenly turned into a skeleton, threw old Brouwer into the brook, and sprang away over the tree-tops with a clap of thunder. 25 30 35 40

This story was immediately matched by a thrice marvellous adventure of Brom Bones, who made light of the Galloping Hessian as an arrant jockey. He affirmed that on returning one night from the neighboring village of 45

14. Major André—John André (1751-1780), British officer, who was captured after negotiating with Arnold, and executed as a spy. 44. arrant jockey—absolute cheat.



Sing Sing, he had been overtaken by this midnight trooper; that he had offered to race with him for a bowl of punch, and should have won it too, for Daredevil beat the goblin horse all hollow, but just as they came to the church bridge, the Hessian bolted, and vanished in a flash of fire.

5 All these tales, told in that drowsy undertone with which men talk in the dark, the countenances of the listeners only now and then receiving a casual gleam from the glare of a pipe, sank deep in the mind of Ichabod. He repaid them in kind with large extracts from his invaluable author, Cotton Mather, and added many marvellous events that had taken place in his native State of  
10 Connecticut, and fearful sights which he had seen in his nightly walks about Sleepy Hollow.

The revel now gradually broke up. The old farmers gathered together their families in their wagons, and were heard for some time rattling along the hollow roads, and over the distant hills. Some of the damsels mounted on  
15 pillions behind their favorite swains, and their light-hearted laughter, mingling with the clatter of hoofs, echoed along the silent woodlands, sounding fainter and fainter, until they gradually died away,—and the late scene of noise and frolic was all silent and deserted. Ichabod only lingered behind, according to the custom of country lovers, to have a tête-à-tête with the heiress; fully  
20 convinced that he was now on the high road to success. What passed at this interview I will not pretend to say, for in fact I do not know. Something, however, I fear me, must have gone wrong, for he certainly sallied forth, after no very great interval, with an air quite desolate and chapfallen. Oh, these women! these women! Could that girl have been playing off any of her coquettish  
25 tricks? Was her encouragement of the poor pedagogue all a mere sham to secure her conquest of his rival? Heaven only knows, not I! Let it suffice to say, Ichabod stole forth with the air of one who had been sacking a henroost, rather than a fair lady's heart. Without looking to the right or left to notice the scene of rural wealth, on which he had so often gloated, he went straight  
30 to the stable, and with several hearty cuffs and kicks roused his steed most uncourteously from the comfortable quarters in which he was soundly sleeping, dreaming of mountains of corn and oats, and whole valleys of timothy and clover.

It was the very witching time of night that Ichabod, heavy-hearted and crest-  
35 fallen, pursued his travels homewards, along the sides of the lofty hills which rise above Tarry Town, and which he had traversed so cheerily in the afternoon. The hour was as dismal as himself. Far below him the Tappan Zee spread its dusky and indistinct waste of waters, with here and there the tall mast of a sloop, riding quietly at anchor under the land. In the dead hush  
40 of midnight, he could even hear the barking of the watch-dog from the opposite shore of the Hudson; but it was so vague and faint as only to give an idea of his distance from this faithful companion of man. Now and then, too, the long-drawn crowing of a cock, accidentally awakened, would sound far, far off, from some farmhouse away among the hills—but it was like a dreaming  
45 sound in his ear. No signs of life occurred near him, but occasionally the melan-

34. witching time—*Cf. Hamlet*, Act III, scene ii, line 406.

choly chirp of a cricket, or perhaps the guttural twang of a bull-frog from a neighboring marsh, as if sleeping uncomfortably and turning suddenly in his bed.

All the stories of ghosts and goblins that he had heard in the afternoon now came crowding upon his recollection. The night grew darker and darker; the stars seemed to sink deeper in the sky, and driving clouds occasionally hid them from his sight. He had never felt so lonely and dismal. He was, moreover, approaching the very place where many of the scenes of the ghost stories had been laid. In the centre of the road stood an enormous tulip-tree, which towered like a giant above all the other trees of the neighborhood, and formed a kind of landmark. Its limbs were gnarled and fantastic, large enough to form trunks for ordinary trees, twisting down almost to the earth, and rising again into the air. It was connected with the tragical story of the unfortunate André, who had been taken prisoner hard by; and was universally known by the name of Major André's tree. The common people regarded it with a mixture of respect and superstition, partly out of sympathy for the fate of its ill-starred namesake, and partly from the tales of strange sights, and doleful lamentations, told concerning it.

As Ichabod approached this fearful tree, he began to whistle; he thought his whistle was answered; it was but a blast sweeping sharply through the dry branches. As he approached a little nearer, he thought he saw something white, hanging in the midst of the tree: he paused, and ceased whistling; but, on looking more narrowly, perceived that it was a place where the tree had been scathed by lightning, and the white wood laid bare. Suddenly he heard a groan—his teeth chattered, and his knees smote against the saddle: it was but the rubbing of one huge bough upon another, as they were swayed about by the breeze. He passed the tree in safety, but new perils lay before him.

About two hundred yards from the tree, a small brook crossed the road, and ran into a marshy and thickly-wooded glen, known by the name of Wiley's Swamp. A few rough logs, laid side by side, served for a bridge over this stream. On that side of the road where the brook entered the wood, a group of oaks and chestnuts, matted thick with wild grapevines, threw a cavernous gloom over it. To pass this bridge was the severest trial. It was at this identical spot that the unfortunate André was captured, and under the covert of those chestnuts and vines were the sturdy yeomen concealed who surprised him. This has ever since been considered a haunted stream, and fearful are the feelings of the school-boy who has to pass it alone after dark.

As he approached the stream his heart began to thump; he summoned up, however, all his resolution, gave his horse half a score of kicks in the ribs, and attempted to dash briskly across the bridge; but instead of starting forward, the perverse old animal made a lateral movement, and ran broadside against the fence. Ichabod, whose fears increased with the delay, jerked the reins on the other side, and kicked lustily with the contrary foot: it was all in vain; his steed started, it is true, but it was only to plunge to the opposite side of the road into a thicket of brambles and alder-bushes. The schoolmaster now bestowed both whip and heel upon the starveling ribs of old Gunpowder, who dashed forward, snuffing and snorting, but came to a stand just by the bridge,

with a suddenness that had nearly sent his rider sprawling over his head. Just at this moment a plashy tramp by the side of the bridge caught the sensitive ear of Ichabod. In the dark shadow of the grove, on the margin of the brook, he beheld something huge, misshapen, and towering. It stirred not, but seemed  
5 gathered up in the gloom, like some gigantic monster ready to spring upon the traveller.

The hair of the affrighted pedagogue rose upon his head with terror. What was to be done? To turn and fly was now too late; and besides, what chance was there of escaping ghost or goblin, if such it was, which could ride upon  
10 the wings of the wind? Summoning up, therefore, a show of courage, he demanded in stammering accents, "Who are you?" He received no reply. He repeated his demand in a still more agitated voice. Still there was no answer. Once more he cudgelled the sides of the inflexible Gunpowder, and, shutting his eyes, broke forth with involuntary fervor into a psalm tune. Just then the  
15 shadowy object of alarm put itself in motion, and with a scramble and a bound stood at once in the middle of the road. Though the night was dark and dismal, yet the form of the unknown might now in some degree be ascertained. He appeared to be a horseman of large dimensions, and mounted on a black horse of powerful frame. He made no offer of molestation or sociability, but kept  
20 aloof on one side of the road, jogging along on the blind side of old Gunpowder, who had now got over his fright and waywardness.

Ichabod, who had no relish for this strange midnight companion, and be-thought himself of the adventure of Brom Bones with the Galloping Hessian, now quickened his steed in hopes of leaving him behind. The stranger, how-  
25 ever, quickened his horse to an equal pace. Ichabod pulled up, and fell into a walk, thinking to lag behind,—the other did the same. His heart began to sink within him; he endeavored to resume his psalm tune, but his parched tongue close to the roof of his mouth, and he could not utter a stave. There was something in the moody and dogged silence of this pertinacious companion  
30 that was mysterious and appalling. It was soon fearfully accounted for. On mounting a rising ground, which brought the figure of his fellow-traveller in relief against the sky, gigantic in height, and muffled in a cloak, Ichabod was horror-struck on perceiving that he was headless! but his horror was still more increased on observing that the head, which should have rested on his shoulders,  
35 was carried before him on the pommel of his saddle! His terror rose to desperation; he rained a shower of kicks and blows upon Gunpowder, hoping by a sudden movement to give his companion the slip; but the spectre started full jump with him. Away, then, they dashed through thick and thin; stones flying and sparks flashing at every bound. Ichabod's flimsy garments fluttered  
40 in the air, as he stretched his long lank body away over his horse's head, in the eagerness of his flight.

They had now reached the road which turns off to Sleepy Hollow; but Gunpowder, who seemed possessed with a demon, instead of keeping up it, made an opposite turn, and plunged headlong down hill to the left. This road leads  
45 through a sandy hollow, shaded by trees for about a quarter of a mile, where it crosses the bridge famous in goblin story; and just beyond swells the green knoll on which stands the whitewashed church.

As yet the panic of the steed had given his unskilful rider an apparent advantage in the chase; but just as he had got half way through the hollow, the girths of the saddle gave way, and he felt it slipping from under him. He seized it by the pommel, and endeavored to hold it firm, but in vain; and had just time to save himself by clasping old Gunpowder round the neck, when the saddle fell to the earth, and he heard it trampled under foot by his pursuer. For a moment the terror of Hans Van Ripper's wrath passed across his mind,—for it was his Sunday saddle; but this was no time for petty fears; the goblin was hard on his haunches; and (unskilful rider that he was!) he had much ado to maintain his seat; sometimes slipping on one side, sometimes on another, and sometimes jolted on the high ridge of his horse's back-bone, with a violence that he verily feared would cleave him asunder.

An opening in the trees now cheered him with the hopes that the church bridge was at hand. The wavering reflection of a silver star in the bosom of the brook told him that he was not mistaken. He saw the walls of the church dimly glaring under the trees beyond. He recollected the place where Brom Bones's ghostly competitor had disappeared. "If I can but reach that bridge," thought Ichabod, "I am safe." Just then he heard the black steed panting and blowing close behind him; he even fancied that he felt his hot breath. Another convulsive kick in the ribs, and old Gunpowder sprang upon the bridge; he thundered over the resounding planks; he gained the opposite side; and now Ichabod cast a look behind to see if his pursuer should vanish, according to rule, in a flash of fire and brimstone. Just then he saw the goblin rising in his stirrups, and in the very act of hurling his head at him. Ichabod endeavored to dodge the horrible missile, but too late. It encountered his cranium with a tremendous crash,—he was tumbled headlong into the dust, and Gunpowder, the black steed, and the goblin rider, passed by like a whirlwind.

The next morning the old horse was found without his saddle, and with the bridle under his feet, soberly cropping the grass at his master's gate. Ichabod did not make his appearance at breakfast; dinner-hour came, but no Ichabod. The boys assembled at the schoolhouse, and strolled idly about the banks of the brook; but no schoolmaster. Hans Van Ripper now began to feel some uneasiness about the fate of poor Ichabod, and his saddle. An inquiry was set on foot, and after diligent investigation they came upon his traces. In one part of the road leading to the church was found the saddle trampled in the dirt; the tracks of horses' hoofs deeply dented in the road, and evidently at furious speed, were traced to the bridge, beyond which, on the bank of a broad part of the brook, where the water ran deep and black, was found the hat of the unfortunate Ichabod, and close beside it a shattered pumpkin.

The brook was searched, but the body of the schoolmaster was not to be discovered. Hans Van Ripper, as executor of his estate, examined the bundle which contained all his worldly effects. They consisted of two shirts and a half; two stocks for the neck; a pair or two of worsted stockings; an old pair of corduroy small-clothes; a rusty razor; a book of psalm tunes full of dog's-ears; and a broken pitch-pipe. As to the books and furniture of the schoolhouse,

17. bridge—*Cf.* Burns's "Tam o' Shanter" for a similar view that witches could not cross the stream.

they belonged to the community, excepting Cotton Mather's History of Witchcraft, a New England Almanac, and a book of dreams and fortune-telling; in which last was a sheet of foolscap much scribbled and blotted in several fruitless attempts to make a copy of verses in honor of the heiress of Van Tassel.

- 5 These magic books and the poetic scrawl were forthwith consigned to the flames by Hans Van Ripper; who, from that time forward, determined to send his children no more to school; observing that he never knew any good come of this same reading and writing. Whatever money the schoolmaster possessed, and he had received his quarter's pay but a day or two before, he
- 10 must have had about his person at the time of his disappearance.

- The mysterious event caused much speculation at the church on the following Sunday. Knots of gazers and gossips were collected in the churchyard, at the bridge, and at the spot where the hat and pumpkin had been found. The stories of Brouwer, of Bones, and a whole budget of others were called
- 15 to mind; and when they had diligently considered them all, and compared them with the symptoms of the present case, they shook their heads, and came to the conclusion that Ichabod had been carried off by the Galloping Hessian. As he was a bachelor, and in nobody's debt, nobody troubled his head any more about him; the school was removed to a different quarter of the Hollow, and
- 20 another pedagogue reigned in his stead.

- It is true, an old farmer, who had been down to New York on a visit several years after, and from whom this account of the ghostly adventure was received, brought home the intelligence that Ichabod Crane was still alive; that he had left the neighborhood partly through fear of the goblin and Hans Van Ripper,
- 25 and partly in mortification at having been suddenly dismissed by the heiress; that he had changed his quarters to a distant part of the country; had kept school and studied law at the same time; had been admitted to the bar; turned politician; electioneered; written for the newspapers; and finally had been made a justice of the ten pound court. Brom Bones, too, who, shortly after his
- 30 rival's disappearance conducted the blooming Katrina in triumph to the altar, was observed to look exceedingly knowing whenever the story of Ichabod was related, and always burst into a hearty laugh at the mention of the pumpkin; which led some to suspect that he knew more about the matter than he chose to tell.

- The old country wives, however, who are the best judges of these matters, maintain to this day that Ichabod was spirited away by supernatural means; and it is a favorite story often told about the neighborhood round the winter evening fire. The bridge became more than ever an object of superstitious awe; and that may be the reason why the road has been altered of late years, so as
- 40 to approach the church by the border of the mill-pond. The schoolhouse being deserted soon fell to decay, and was reported to be haunted by the ghost of the unfortunate pedagogue; and the plough-boy, loitering homeward of a still summer evening, has often fancied his voice at a distance, chanting a melancholy psalm tune among the tranquil solitudes of Sleepy Hollow.

29. ten pound court—one in which petty cases are considered.

## POSTSCRIPT

FOUND IN THE HANDWRITING OF MR. KNICKERBOCKER

The preceding tale is given almost in the precise words in which I heard it related at a Corporation meeting of the ancient city of the Manhattoes, at which were present many of its sagest and most illustrious burghers. The narrator was a pleasant, shabby, gentlemanly old fellow in pepper-and-salt clothes, with a sadly humorous face; and one whom I strongly suspected of being poor,—he made such efforts to be entertaining. When his story was concluded there was much laughter and approbation, particularly from two or three deputy aldermen, who had been asleep the greater part of the time. There was, however, one tall, dry-looking old gentleman, with beetling eyebrows, who maintained a grave and rather severe face throughout; now and then folding his arms, inclining his head, and looking down upon the floor, as if turning a doubt over in his mind. He was one of your wary men, who never laugh but upon good grounds—when they have reason and the law on their side. When the mirth of the rest of the company had subsided, and silence was restored, he leaned one arm on the elbow of his chair, and sticking the other akimbo, demanded, with a slight but exceedingly sage motion of the head, and contraction of the brow, what was the moral of the story, and what it went to prove.

The story-teller, who was just putting a glass of wine to his lips, as a refreshment after his toils, paused for a moment, looked at his inquirer with an air of infinite deference, and, lowering the glass slowly to the table, observed that the story was intended most logically to prove:

“That there is no situation in life but has its advantages and pleasures, provided we will but take a joke as we find it;

“That, therefore, he that runs races with goblin troopers is likely to have rough riding of it;

“Ergo, for a country schoolmaster to be refused the hand of a Dutch heiress is a certain step to high preferment in the state.”

The cautious old gentleman knit his brows tenfold closer after this explanation, being sorely puzzled by the ratiocination of the syllogism; while, meantime, the one in pepper-and-salt eyed him with something of a triumphant leer. At length he observed that all this was very well, but still he thought the story a little on the extravagant; there were one or two points on which he had his doubts.

“Faith, sir,” replied the story-teller, “as to that matter, I don’t believe one half of it myself.”

D. K.

## THE DISCOVERY OF LAND

From *The Life and Voyages of Columbus* (1828), Book III, Chapter IV. Irving's account was based on Navarrete's well-documented *Journal of Columbus*.

ON THE morning of the 7th of October, at sunrise, several of the admiral's crew thought they beheld land in the west, but so indistinctly that no one ventured to proclaim it, lest he should be mistaken, and forfeit all chance of the reward; the *Niña*, however, being a good sailor, pressed forward to ascertain the fact. In a little while a flag was hoisted at her mast-head, and a gun discharged, being the <sup>the</sup> ~~preconcerted~~ <sup>the</sup> signals for land. New joy was awakened throughout the little squadron, and every eye was turned to the west. As they advanced, however, their cloud-built hopes faded away, and before evening the fancied land had again melted into air.

The crews now sank into a degree of dejection proportioned to their recent excitement; but new circumstances occurred to arouse them. Columbus, having observed great flights of small field-birds going towards the southwest, concluded they must be secure of some neighboring land, where they would find food and a resting-place. He knew the importance which the Portuguese voyagers attached to the flight of birds, by following which they had discovered most of their islands. He had now come seven hundred and fifty leagues, the distance at which he had computed to find the island of Cipango; as there was no appearance of it, he might have missed it through some mistake in the latitude. He determined, therefore, on the evening of the 7th of October, to alter his course to the west-southwest, the direction in which the birds generally flew, and continue that direction for at least two days. After all, it was no great deviation from his main course, and would meet the wishes of the Pinzons, as well as be inspiriting to his followers generally.

For three days they stood in this direction, and the farther they went the more frequent and encouraging were the signs of land. Flights of small birds of various colors, some of them such as sing in the fields, came flying about the ships, and then continued towards the southwest, and others were heard also flying by in the night. Tunny fish played about the smooth sea, and a heron, a pelican, and a duck were seen, all bound in the same direction. The herbage which floated by was fresh and green, as if recently from land, and the air, Columbus observed, was sweet and fragrant as April breezes in Seville.

All these, however, were regarded by the crews as so many delusions beguiling them on to destruction; and when on the evening of the third day they beheld the sun go down upon a shoreless horizon, they broke forth into turbulent clamor. They exclaimed against this obstinacy in tempting fate by continuing on into a boundless sea. They insisted upon turning homeward, and abandoning the voyage as hopeless. Columbus endeavored to pacify them by

4. *Niña*—the third of the three ships, commanded by Vicente Pinzon. 9. *air*—"Hist. del Almirante, cap. 20. *Journal of Columbus*, Navarrete, tom. i." (Irving's note) 22. *Pinzons*—Martin and Vicente Pinzon, "magnates" of Palos, helped finally to organize the expedition; Martin commanded the *Pinta*, and Vicente the *Niña*.

gentle words and promises of large rewards; but finding that they only increased in clamor, he assumed a decided tone. He told them it was useless to murmur; the expedition had been sent by the sovereigns to seek the Indies, and, happen what might, he was determined to persevere, until, by the blessing of God, he should accomplish the enterprise.

Columbus was now at open defiance with his crew, and his situation became desperate. Fortunately the manifestations of the vicinity of land were such on the following day as no longer to admit a doubt. Besides a quantity of fresh weeds, such as grow in rivers, they saw a green fish of a kind which keeps about rocks; then a branch of thorn with berries on it, and recently separated from the tree, floated by them; then they picked up a reed, a small board, and, above all, a staff artificially carved. All gloom and mutiny now gave way to sanguine expectation; and throughout the day each one was eagerly on the watch, in hopes of being the first one to discover the long-sought-for land.

In the evening, when, according to invariable custom on board of the admiral's ship, the mariners had sung the *Salve Regina*, or *vesper hymn* to the Virgin, he made an impressive address to his crew. He pointed out the goodness of God in thus conducting them by soft and favoring breezes across a tranquil ocean, cheering their hopes continually with fresh signs, increasing as their fears augmented, and thus leading and guiding them to a promised land. He now reminded them of the orders he had given on leaving the Canaries, that, after sailing westward seven hundred leagues, they should not make sail after midnight. Present appearances authorized such a precaution. He thought it probable they would make land that very night; he ordered, therefore, a vigilant look-out to be kept from the fore-castle, promising to whomsoever should make the discovery, a doublet of velvet, in addition to the pension to be given by the sovereigns.

The breeze had been fresh all day, with more sea than usual, and they had made great progress. At sunset they had stood again to the west, and were plowing the waves at a rapid rate, the *Pinta* keeping the lead, from her superior sailing. The greatest animation prevailed throughout the ships; not an eye was closed that night. As the evening darkened, Columbus took his station on the top of the castle or cabin on the high poop of his vessel, ranging his eye along the dusky horizon, and maintaining an intense and unremitting watch. About ten o'clock he thought he beheld a light glimmering at a great distance. Fearing his eager hopes might deceive him, he called to Pedro Gutierrez, gentleman of the king's bedchamber, and inquired whether he saw such a light; the latter replied in the affirmative. Doubtful whether it might not yet be some delusion of the fancy, Columbus called Rodrigo Sanchez of Segovia, and made the same inquiry. By the time the latter had descended the round-house, the light had disappeared. They saw it once or twice afterwards in sudden and passing gleams, as if it were a torch in the bark of a fisherman, rising and sinking with the waves; or in the hand of some person on shore, borne up and down as he walked from house to house. So transient and uncertain were these

16. *Salve Regina*—*Salve, regina misericordiae* ("Hail, queen of compassion")—the first words of a hymn in the Roman Catholic breviary. 27. *sovereigns*—"*Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 21." (Irving's note) 40. *round-house*—a cabin on the afterpart of the quarter-deck.



gleams that few attached any importance to them; Columbus, however, considered them as certain signs of land, and, moreover, that the land was inhabited.

They continued their course until two in the morning, when a gun from the *Pinta* gave the joyful signal of land. It was first descried by a mariner named Rodrigo de Triana; but the reward was afterwards adjudged to the admiral, for having previously perceived the light. The land was now clearly seen about two leagues distant, whereupon they took in sail and laid to, waiting impatiently for the dawn.

The thoughts and feelings of Columbus in this little space of time must have been tumultuous and intense. At length, in spite of every difficulty and danger, he had accomplished his object. The great mystery of the ocean was revealed; his theory, which had been the scoff of sages, was triumphantly established; he had secured to himself a glory which must be as durable as the world itself.

It is difficult to conceive the feelings of such a man at such a moment; or the conjectures which must have thronged upon his mind, as to the land which lay before him, covered with darkness. That it was fruitful, was evident from the vegetables which floated from its shores. He thought, too, that he perceived the fragrance of aromatic groves. The moving light which he had beheld had proved that it was the residence of man. But what were its inhabitants? Were they like those of the other parts of the globe; or were they some strange and monstrous race, such as the imagination was prone in those times to give to all remote and unknown regions? Had he come upon some wild island far in the Indian sea; or was this the famed Cipango itself, the object of his golden fancies? A thousand speculations of the kind must have swarmed upon him, as, with his anxious crews, he waited for the night to pass away, wondering whether the morning light would reveal a savage wilderness, or dawn upon spicy groves and glittering fanes and gilded cities, and all the splendor of oriental civilization.

## LEGEND OF THE MOOR'S LEGACY

Published in *The Alhambra* (1832). The Alhambra is a medieval palace of the Moorish kings on a hill overlooking Granada in southern Spain. The Moorish power declined after the twelfth century, and in 1492 Granada fell into the hands of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. Irving lived in the Alhambra for three months in 1829.

Just within the fortress of the Alhambra, in front of the royal palace, is a broad open esplanade, called the Place or Square of the Cisterns (La Plaza de los Algibes), so called from being undermined by reservoirs of water, hidden from sight, and which have existed from the time of the Moors. At one corner of this esplanade is a Moorish well, cut through the living rock to a great depth, the water of which is cold as ice and clear as crystal. The wells made by the Moors are always in repute, for it is well known what pains they took to penetrate to the purest and sweetest springs and fountains. The one of which we now speak is famous throughout Granada, insomuch that water-

carriers, some bearing great water-jars on their shoulders, others driving asses before them laden with earthen vessels, are ascending and descending the steep woody avenues of the Alhambra, from early dawn until a late hour of the night.

Fountains and wells, ever since the scriptural days, have been noted gossiping-places in hot climates; and at the well in question there is a kind of perpetual club kept up during the livelong day, by the invalids, old women, and other curious do-nothing folk of the fortress, who sit here on the stone benches, under an awning spread over the well to shelter the toll-gatherer from the sun, and dawdle over the gossip of the fortress, and question every water-carrier that arrives about the news of the city, and make long comments on everything they hear and see. Not an hour of the day but loitering housewives and idle maid-servants may be seen, lingering, with pitcher on head or in hand, to hear the last of the endless tattle of these worthies.

Among the water-carriers who once resorted to this well, there was a sturdy, strong-backed, bandy-legged little fellow, named Pedro Gil, but called Peregil for shortness. Being a water-carrier, he was a Gallego, or native of Galicia, of course. Nature seems to have formed races of men, as she has of animals, for different kinds of drudgery. In France the shoeblacks are all Savoyards, the porters of hotels all Swiss, and in the days of hoops and hair powder in England, no man could give the regular swing to a sedan-chair but a bog-trotting Irishman. So in Spain, the carriers of water and bearers of burdens are all sturdy little natives of Galicia. No man says, "Get me a porter," but, "Call a Gallego."

To return from this digression, Peregil the Gallego had begun business with merely a great earthen jar which he carried upon his shoulder; by degrees he rose in the world, and was enabled to purchase an assistant of a correspondent class of animals, being a stout shaggy-haired donkey. On each side of this his long-eared aide-de-camp, in a kind of pannier, were slung his water-jars, covered with fig-leaves to protect them from the sun. There was not a more industrious water-carrier in all Granada, nor one more merry withal. The streets rang with his cheerful voice as he trudged after his donkey, singing forth the usual summer note that resounds through the Spanish towns: "*Quien quiere agua—agua mas fria que la nieve?*"—"Who wants water—water colder than snow? Who wants water from the well of the Alhambra, cold as ice and clear as crystal?" When he served a customer with a sparkling glass, it was always with a pleasant word that caused a smile; and if, perchance, it was a comely dame or dimpling damsel, it was always with a sly leer and a compliment to her beauty that was irresistible. Thus Peregil the Gallego was noted throughout all Granada for being one of the civilest, pleasantest, and happiest of mortals. Yet it is not he who sings the loudest and jokes most that has the lightest heart. Under all this air of merriment, honest Peregil had his cares and troubles. He had a large family of ragged children to support, who were hungry and clamorous as a nest of young swallows, and beset him with their outcries for food whenever he came home of an evening. He had a helpmate, too, who

17. Galicia—a section of northwestern Spain. 19. Savoyards—mountaineers from Savoy, in southeastern France.

was anything but a help to him. She had been a village beauty before marriage, noted for her skill at dancing the *bolero* and rattling the castanets; and she still retained her early propensities, spending the hard earnings of honest Peregil in frippery, and laying the very donkey under requisition for junketing parties into the country on Sundays and saints' days, and those innumerable holidays, which are rather more numerous in Spain than the days of the week. With all this she was a little of a slattern, something more of a lie-abed, and, above all, a gossip of the first water; neglecting house, household, and everything else, to loiter slipshod in the houses of her gossip neighbors.

He, however, who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, accommodates the yoke of matrimony to the submissive neck. Peregil bore all the heavy dispensations of wife and children with as meek a spirit as his donkey bore the water-jars; and, however he might shake his ears in private, never ventured to question the household virtues of his slattern spouse.

He loved his children, too, even as an owl loves its owlets, seeing in them his own image multiplied and perpetuated; for they were a sturdy, long-backed, bandy-legged little brood. The great pleasure of honest Peregil was, whenever he could afford himself a scanty holiday, and had a handful of *maravedis* to spare, to take the whole litter forth with him, some in his arms, some tugging at his skirts, and some trudging at his heels, and to treat them to a gambol among the orchards of the Vega, while his wife was dancing with her holiday friends in the Angosturas of the Darro.

It was a late hour one summer night, and most of the water-carriers had desisted from their toils. The day had been uncommonly sultry; the night was one of those delicious moonlights which tempt the inhabitants of southern climes to indemnify themselves for the heat and inaction of the day, by lingering in the open air, and enjoying its tempered sweetness until after midnight. Customers for water were therefore still abroad. Peregil, like a considerate, painstaking father, thought of his hungry children. "One more journey to the well," said he to himself, "to earn a Sunday's *puchero* for the little ones." So saying, he trudged manfully up the steep avenue of the Alhambra, singing as he went, and now and then bestowing a hearty thwack with a cudgel on the flanks of his donkey, either by way of cadence to the song, or refreshment to the animal; for dry blows serve in lieu of provender in Spain for all beasts of burden.

When arrived at the well, he found it deserted by every one except a solitary stranger in Moorish garb, seated on a stone bench in the moonlight. Peregil paused at first and regarded him with surprise, not unmixed with awe, but the Moor feebly beckoned him to approach. "I am faint and ill," said he; "aid me to return to the city, and I will pay thee double what thou couldst gain by thy jars of water."

The honest heart of the little water-carrier was touched with compassion at

2. *bolero*—a Spanish dance representing the progress of love. 10. *tempers the wind*—from *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1768) by Laurence Sterne (1713-1768). 18. *maravedis*—small coins worth two-fifths of a cent each. 21. *Vega*—district (and river) west of Granada. 22. *Angosturas of the Darro*—bridges and open places near the river Darro, which flows through Granada. 30. *puchero*—pot of meat.

the appeal of the stranger. "God forbid," said he, "that I should ask fee or reward for doing a common act of humanity." He accordingly helped the Moor on his donkey, and set off slowly for Granada, the poor Moslem being so weak that it was necessary to hold him on the animal to keep him from falling to the earth.

5

When they entered the city the water-carrier demanded whither he should conduct him. "Alas!" said the Moor, faintly, "I have neither home nor habitation; I am a stranger in the land. Suffer me to lay my head this night beneath thy roof, and thou shalt be amply repaid."

Honest Peregil thus saw himself unexpectedly saddled with an infidel guest, but he was too humane to refuse a night's shelter to a fellow-being in so forlorn a plight; so he conducted the Moor to his dwelling. The children, who had sallied forth open-mouthed as usual on hearing the tramp of the donkey, ran back with affright when they beheld the turbaned stranger, and hid themselves behind their mother. The latter stepped forth intrepidly, like a ruffling hen before her brood when a vagrant dog approaches.

15

"What infidel companion," cried she, "is this you have brought home at this late hour to draw upon us the eyes of the inquisition?"

"Be quiet, wife," replied the Gallego; "here is a poor sick stranger, without friend or home; wouldst thou turn him forth to perish in the streets?"

20

The wife would still have remonstrated, for although she lived in a hovel, she was a furious stickler for the credit of her house; the little water-carrier, however, for once was stiffnecked, and refused to bend beneath the yoke. He assisted the poor Moslem to alight, and spread a mat and sheep-skin for him, on the ground, in the coolest part of the house; being the only kind of bed that his poverty afforded.

25

In a little while the Moor was seized with violent convulsions, which defied all the ministering skill of the simple water-carrier. The eye of the poor patient acknowledged his kindness. During an interval of his fits he called him to his side, and addressing him in a low voice: "My end," said he, "I fear is at hand. If I die, I bequeath you this box as a reward for your charity"; so saying, he opened his *albornoz*, or cloak, and showed a small box of sandal-wood, strapped round his body. "God grant, my friend," replied the worthy little Gallego, "that you may live many years to enjoy your treasure, whatever it may be." The Moor shook his head; he laid his hand upon the box, and would have said something more concerning it, but his convulsions returned with increasing violence, and in a little while he expired.

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35

The water-carrier's wife was now as one distracted. "This comes," said she, "of your foolish good-nature, always running into scrapes to oblige others. What will become of us when this corpse is found in our house? We shall be sent to prison as murderers; and if we escape with our lives, we shall be ruined by notaries and *alguazils*."

40

Poor Peregil was in equal tribulation, and almost repented himself of having done a good deed. At length a thought struck him. "It is not yet day," said he; "I can convey the dead body out of the city, and bury it in the sands on the

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banks of the Xenil. No one saw the Moor enter our dwelling, and no one will know anything of his death."

So said, so done. The wife aided him; they rolled the body of the unfortunate Moslem in the mat on which he had expired, laid it across the ass, and Peregil  
5 set out with it for the banks of the river.

As ill-luck would have it, there lived opposite to the water-carrier a barber named Pedrillo Pedrugo, one of the most prying, tattling, and mischief-making of his gossip tribe. He was a weasel-faced, spider-legged varlet, supple and insinuating; the famous barber of Seville could not surpass him for his universal  
10 knowledge of the affairs of others, and he had no more power of retention than a sieve. It was said that he slept but with one eye at a time, and kept one ear uncovered, so that even in his sleep he might see and hear all that was going on. Certain it is, he was a sort of scandalous chronicle for the quidnuncs of Granada, and had more customers than all the rest of his fraternity.

15 This meddlesome barber heard Peregil arrive at an unusual hour at night, and the exclamations of his wife and children. His head instantly popped out of a little window which served him as a look-out, and he saw his neighbor assist a man in Moorish garb into his dwelling. This was so strange an occurrence that Pedrillo Pedrugo slept not a wink that night. Every five minutes he  
20 was at his loophole, watching the lights that gleamed through the chinks of his neighbor's door, and before daylight he beheld Peregil sally forth with his donkey unusually laden.

The inquisitive barber was in a fidget; he slipped on his clothes, and, stealing forth silently, followed the water-carrier at a distance, until he saw him dig  
25 a hole in the sandy bank of the Xenil, and bury something that had the appearance of a dead body.

The barber hied him home, and fidgeted about his shop, setting everything upside down, until sunrise. He then took a basin under his arm, and sallied forth to the house of his daily customer the Alcalde.

30 The Alcalde had just risen. Pedrillo Pedrugo seated him in a chair, threw a napkin round his neck, put a basin of hot water under his chin, and began to mollify his beard with his fingers.

"Strange doings!" said Pedrugo, who played barber and newsmonger at the same time,—“strange doings! Robbery, and murder, and burial all in one  
35 night!"

"Hey!—how!—what is that you say," cried the Alcalde.

"I say," replied the barber, rubbing a piece of soap over the nose and mouth of the dignitary, for a Spanish barber disdains to employ a brush,—“I say that Peregil the Gallego has robbed and murdered a Moorish Mussulman, and  
40 buried him, this blessed night. *Maldita sea la noche*;—Accursed be the night for the same!"

"But how do you know all this?" demanded the Alcalde.

"Be patient, Señor, and you shall hear all about it," replied Pedrillo, taking him by the nose and sliding a razor over his cheek. He then recounted all that

1. *Xenil*—the Xenil or Genil River, a small stream flowing through Granada. 9. *barber of Seville*—Figaro in Beaumarchais's comedy, written in 1773, and in Rossini's opera, 1816. 13. *quidnuncs*—gossips (those asking "What now?"). 29. *Alcalde*—mayor-magistrate.

he had seen, going through both operations at the same time, shaving his beard, washing his chin, and wiping him dry with a dirty napkin, while he was robbing, murdering, and burying the Moslem.

Now it so happened that this Alcalde was one of the most overbearing, and at the same time most griping and corrupt curmudgeons in all Granada. It could not be denied, however, that he set a high value upon justice, for he sold it at its weight in gold. He presumed the case in point to be one of murder and robbery; doubtless there must be a rich spoil; how was it to be secured into the legitimate hands of the law? for as to merely entrapping the delinquent—that would be feeding the gallows; but entrapping the booty—that would be enriching the judge, and such, according to his creed, was the great end of justice. So thinking, he summoned to his presence his trustiest *alguazil*—a gaunt, hungry-looking varlet, clad, according to the custom of his order, in the ancient Spanish garb, a broad black beaver turned up at its sides; a quaint ruff; a small black cloak dangling from his shoulders; rusty black under-clothes that set off his spare wiry frame, while in his hand he bore a slender white wand, the dreaded insignia of his office. Such was the legal bloodhound of the ancient Spanish breed, that he put upon the traces of the unlucky water-carrier, and such was his speed and certainty, that he was upon the haunches of poor Peregil before he had returned to his dwelling, and brought both him and his donkey before the dispenser of justice.

The Alcalde bent upon him one of the most terrific frowns. "Hark ye, culprit!" roared he, in a voice that made the knees of the little Gallego smite together,—“hark ye, culprit! there is no need of denying thy guilt, everything is known to me. A gallows is the proper reward for the crime thou hast committed, but I am merciful, and readily listen to reason. The man that has been murdered in thy house was a Moor, an infidel, the enemy of our faith. It was doubtless in a fit of religious zeal that thou hast slain him. I will be indulgent, therefore; render up the property of which thou hast robbed him, and we will hush the matter up.”

The poor water-carrier called upon all the saints to witness his innocence; alas! not one of them appeared; and if they had the Alcalde would have disbelieved the whole calendar. The water-carrier related the whole story of the dying Moor with the straightforward simplicity of truth, but it was all in vain. “Wilt thou persist in saying,” demanded the judge, “that this Moslem had neither gold nor jewels, which were the object of thy cupidity?”

“As I hope to be saved, your worship,” replied the water-carrier, “he had nothing but a small box of sandal-wood, which he bequeathed to me in reward for my services.”

“A box of sandal-wood! a box of sandal-wood!” exclaimed the Alcalde, his eyes sparkling at the idea of precious jewels. “And where is this box? where have you concealed it?”

“An’ it please your grace,” replied the water-carrier, “it is in one of the panniers of my mule, and heartily at the service of your worship.”

He had hardly spoken the words, when the keen *alguazil* darted off, and reappeared in an instant with the mysterious box of sandal-wood. The Alcalde opened it with an eager and trembling hand; all pressed forward to gaze upon

the treasure it was expected to contain; when, to their disappointment, nothing appeared within, but a parchment scroll, covered with Arabic characters, and an end of a waxen taper.

When there is nothing to be gained by the conviction of a prisoner, justice, even in Spain, is apt to be impartial. The Alcalde, having recovered from his disappointment, and found that there was really no booty in the case, now listened dispassionately to the explanation of the water-carrier, which was corroborated by the testimony of his wife. Being convinced, therefore, of his innocence, he discharged him from arrest; nay, more, he permitted him to carry off the Moor's legacy, the box of sandal-wood and its contents, as the well-merited reward of his humanity; but he retained his donkey in payment of costs and charges.

Behold the unfortunate little Gallego reduced once more to the necessity of being his own water-carrier, and trudging up to the well of the Alhambra with a great earthen jar upon his shoulder.

As he toiled up the hill in the heat of a summer noon, his usual good-humor forsook him. "Dog of an Alcalde!" would he cry, "to rob a poor man of the morsels of his subsistence, of the best friend he had in the world!" And then at the remembrance of the beloved companion of his labors, all the kindness of his nature would break forth. "Ah, donkey of my heart!" would he exclaim, resting his burden on a stone, and wiping the sweat from his brow,—“ah, donkey of my heart! I warrant me thou thinkest of thy old master! I warrant me thou missest the water-jars—poor beast!”

To add to his afflictions, his wife received him, on his return home, with whimperings and repinings; she had clearly the vantage-ground of him, having warned him not to commit the egregious act of hospitality which had brought on him all these misfortunes; and, like a knowing woman, she took every occasion to throw her superior sagacity in his teeth. If her children lacked food, or needed a new garment, she could answer with a sneer, "Go to your father—he is heir to King Chico of the Alhambra: ask him to help you out of the Moor's strong box."

Was ever poor mortal so soundly punished for having done a good action? The unlucky Peregil was grieved in flesh and spirit, but still he bore meekly with the railings of his spouse. At length, one evening, when, after a hot day's toil, she taunted him in the usual manner, he lost all patience. He did not venture to retort upon her, but his eye rested upon the box of sandal-wood, which lay on a shelf with lid half open, as if laughing in mockery at his vexation. Seizing it up, he dashed it with indignation to the floor. "Unlucky was the day that I ever set eyes on thee," he cried, "or sheltered thy master beneath my roof!"

As the box struck the floor, the lid flew wide open, and the parchment scroll rolled forth.

Peregil sat regarding the scroll for some time in moody silence. At length rallying his ideas, "Who knows," thought he, "but this writing may be of some importance, as the Moor seems to have guarded it with such care?" Picking it up therefore, he put it in his bosom, and the next morning, as he was crying

30. **King Chico**—Boabdil, the last Moorish king to possess the Alhambra, known as *El Rey Chico*, "King Do-nothing."

water through the streets, he stopped at the shop of a Moor, a native of Tangiers, who sold trinkets and perfumery in the Zacatin, and asked him to explain the contents.

The Moor read the scroll attentively, then stroked his beard and smiled. "This manuscript," said he, "is a form of incantation for the recovery of hidden treasure that is under the power of enchantment. It is said to have such virtue that the strongest bolts and bars, nay the adamant rock itself, will yield before it!" 5

"Bah!" cried the little Gallego, "what is all that to me? I am no enchanter, and know nothing of buried treasure." So saying, he shouldered his water-jar, left the scroll in the hands of the Moor, and trudged forward on his daily rounds. 10

That evening, however, as he rested himself about twilight at the well of the Alhambra, he found a number of gossips assembled at the place, and their conversation, as is not unusual at that shadowy hour, turned upon old tales and traditions of a supernatural nature. Being all poor as rats, they dwelt with peculiar fondness upon the popular theme of enchanted riches left by the Moors in various parts of the Alhambra. Above all, they concurred in the belief that there were great treasures buried deep in the earth under the Tower of the Seven Floors. 20

These stories made an unusual impression on the mind of the honest Peregil, and they sank deeper and deeper into his thoughts as he returned alone down the darkling avenues. "If, after all, there should be treasure hid beneath that tower; and if the scroll I left with the Moor should enable me to get at it!" In the sudden ecstasy of the thought he had well nigh let fall his water-jar. 25

That night he tumbled and tossed, and could scarcely get a wink of sleep for the thoughts that were bewildering his brain. Bright and early he repaired to the shop of the Moor, and told him all that was passing in his mind. "You can read Arabic," said he: "suppose we go together to the tower, and try the effect of the charm; if it fails, we are no worse off than before; but if it succeeds, we will share equally all the treasure we may discover." 30

"Hold," replied the Moslem; "this writing is not sufficient of itself; it must be read at midnight by the light of a taper singularly compounded and prepared, the ingredients of which are not within my reach. Without such a taper the scroll is of no avail." 35

"Say no more!" cried the little Gallego; "I have such a taper at hand, and will bring it here in a moment." So saying, he hastened home, and soon returned with the end of yellow wax taper that he had found in the box of sandal-wood.

The Moor felt it and smelled of it. "Here are rare and costly perfumes," said he, "combined with this yellow wax. This is the kind of taper specified in the scroll. While this burns, the strongest walls and most secret caverns will remain open. Woe to him, however, who lingers within until it be extinguished. He will remain enchanted with the treasure." 40

**2. Zacatin**—one of the narrow market-streets. **19-20. Tower of the Seven Floors**—through the gate of which Boabdil is said to have left the Alhambra. The fact of the gate's being walled up after his departure gave rise to the legend of buried treasure.



It was now agreed between them to try the charm that very night. At a late hour, therefore, when nothing was stirring but bats and owls, they ascended the woody hill of the Alhambra, and approached that awful tower, shrouded by trees and rendered formidable by so many traditionary tales. By the light of  
5 a lantern they groped their way through bushes, and over fallen stones, to the door of a vault beneath the tower. With fear and trembling they descended a flight of steps cut into the rock. It led to an empty chamber, damp and drear, from which another flight of steps led to a deeper vault. In this way they descended four several flights, leading into as many vaults, one below the other,  
10 but the floor of the fourth was solid; and though, according to tradition, there remained three vaults still below, it was said to be impossible to penetrate farther, the residue being shut up by strong enchantment. The air of this vault was damp and chilly, and had an earthy smell, and the light scarce cast forth any rays. They paused here for a time, in breathless suspense, until they faintly  
15 heard the clock of the watch-tower strike midnight; upon this they lit the waxen taper, which diffused an odor of myrrh and frankincense and storax.

The Moor began to read in a hurried voice. He had scarce finished when there was a noise as of subterraneous thunder. The earth shook, and the floor, yawning open, disclosed a flight of steps. Trembling with awe, they descended,  
20 and by the light of the lantern found themselves in another vault covered with Arabic inscriptions. In the centre stood a great chest, secured with seven bands of steel, at each end of which sat an enchanted Moor in armor, but motionless as a statue, being controlled by the power of the incantation. Before the chest were several jars filled with gold and silver and precious stones. In the largest  
25 of these they thrust their arms up to the elbow, and at every dip hauled forth handfuls of broad yellow pieces of Moorish gold, or bracelets and ornaments of the same precious metal, while occasionally a necklace of Oriental pearl would stick to their fingers. Still they trembled and breathed short while cramming their pockets with the spoils; and cast many a fearful glance at the two  
30 enchanted Moors, who sat grim and motionless, glaring upon them with uninking eyes. At length, struck with a sudden panic of some fancied noise, they both rushed up the staircase, tumbled over one another into the upper apartment, overturned and extinguished the waxen taper, and the pavement again closed with a thundering sound.

Filled with dismay, they did not pause until they had groped their way out  
35 of the tower, and beheld the stars shining through the trees. Then, seating themselves upon the grass, they divided the spoil, determining to content themselves for the present with this mere skimming of the jars, but to return on some future night and drain them to the bottom. To make sure of each other's  
40 good faith, also, they divided the talismans between them, one retaining the scroll and the other the taper; this done, they set off with light hearts and well-lined pockets for Granada.

As they wended their way down the hill, the shrewd Moor whispered a word of counsel in the ear of the simple little water-carrier.

45 "Friend Peregil," said he, "all this affair must be kept a profound secret until we have secured the treasure, and conveyed it out of harm's way. If a whisper of it gets to the ear of the Alcalde, we are undone!"

"Certainly," replied the Gallego, "nothing can be more true."

"Friend Peregil," said the Moor, "you are a discreet man, and I make no doubt can keep a secret; but you have a wife."

"She shall not know a word of it," replied the little water-carrier, sturdily.

"Enough," said the Moor, "I depend upon thy discretion and thy promise." 5

Never was promise more positive and sincere; but, alas! what man can keep a secret from his wife? Certainly not such a one as Peregil the water-carrier, who was one of the most loving and tractable of husbands. On his return home, he found his wife moping in a corner. "Mighty well," cried she as he entered, "you've come at last, after rambling about until this hour of the night. I wonder you have not brought home another Moor as a house-mate." Then bursting into tears, she began to wring her hands and smite her breast. "Unhappy woman that I am!" exclaimed she, "what will become of me? My house stripped and plundered by lawyers and *alguazils*; my husband a do-no-good, that no longer brings home bread to his family, but goes rambling about day and night, with infidel Moors! O my children! my children! what, what will become of us? We shall all have to beg in the streets!" 10 15

Honest Peregil was so moved by the distress of his spouse that he could not help whimpering also. His heart was as full as his pocket, and not to be restrained. Thrusting his hand into the latter he hauled forth three or four broad gold-pieces, and slipped them into her bosom. The poor woman stared with astonishment, and could not understand the meaning of this golden shower. Before she could recover her surprise, the little Gallego drew forth a chain of gold and dangled it before her, capering with exultation, his mouth distended from ear to ear. 20 25

"Holy Virgin protect us!" exclaimed the wife. "What hast thou been doing, Peregil? surely thou hast not been committing murder and robbery!"

The idea scarce entered the brain of the poor woman than it became a certainty with her. She saw a prison and a gallows in the distance, and a little bandy-legged Gallego hanging pendent from it; and, overcome by the horrors conjured up by imagination, fell into violent hysterics. 30

What could the poor man do? He had no other means of pacifying his wife, and dispelling the phantoms of her fancy, than by relating the whole story of his good fortune. This, however, he did not do until he had exacted from her the most solemn promise to keep it a profound secret from every living being. 35

To describe her joy would be impossible. She flung her arms round the neck of her husband, and almost strangled him with her caresses. "Now, wife," exclaimed the little man, with honest exultation, "what say you now to the Moor's legacy? Henceforth never abuse me for helping a fellow-creature in distress."

The honest Gallego retired to his sheep-skin mat, and slept as soundly as if on a bed of down. Not so his wife. She emptied the whole contents of his pockets upon the mat, and sat counting gold pieces of Arabic coin, trying on necklaces and earrings, and fancying the figure she should one day make when permitted to enjoy her riches. 40

On the following morning the honest Gallego took a broad golden coin, and repaired with it to a jeweller's shop in the Zacatin to offer it for sale, pretending to have found it among the ruins of the Alhambra. The jeweller saw that it 45

had an Arabic inscription, and was of the purest gold; he offered, however, but a third of its value, with which the water-carrier was perfectly content. Peregil now bought new clothes for his little flock, and all kinds of toys, together with ample provisions for a hearty meal, and returning to his dwelling, set all his  
5 children dancing around him, while he capered in the midst, the happiest of fathers.

The wife of the water-carrier kept her promise of secrecy with surprising strictness. For a whole day and a half she went about, with a look of mystery and a heart swelling almost to bursting; yet she held her peace, though sur-  
10 rounded by her gossips. It is true she could not help giving herself a few airs, apologized for her ragged dress, and talked of ordering a new *basquina*, all trimmed with gold lace and bugles, and a new lace *mantilla*. She threw out hints of her husband's intention of leaving off his trade of water-carrying, as it did not altogether agree with his health. In fact, she thought they should all  
15 retire to the country for the summer, that the children might have the benefit of the mountain air, for there was no living in the city in this sultry season.

The neighbors stared at each other, and thought the poor woman had lost her wits; and her airs and graces and eloquent pretensions were the theme of universal scoffing and merriment among her friends the moment her back was  
20 turned.

If she restrained herself abroad, however, she indemnified herself at home, and putting a string of rich Oriental pearls round her neck, Moorish bracelets on her arms, and an *aigrette* of diamonds on her head, sailed backwards and forwards in her slattern rags about the room, now and then stopping to  
25 admire herself in a broken mirror. Nay, in the impulse of her simple vanity, she could not resist, on one occasion, showing herself at the window, to enjoy the effect of her finery on the passers by.

As the fates would have it, Pedrillo Pedrugo, the meddlesome barber, was at this moment sitting idly in his shop on the opposite side of the street, when  
30 his ever-watchful eye caught the sparkle of a diamond. In an instant he was at his loophole reconnoitring the slattern spouse of the water-carrier, decorated with the splendor of an Eastern bride. No sooner had he taken an accurate inventory of her ornaments, than he posted off with all speed to the Alcalde. In a little while the hungry *alguazil* was again on the scent, and before the day  
35 was over the unfortunate Peregil was once more dragged into the presence of the judge.

"How is this, villain!" cried the Alcalde, in a furious voice. "You told me that the infidel who died in your house left nothing behind but an empty coffer, and now I hear of your wife flaunting in her rags decked out with pearls and  
40 diamonds. Wretch that thou art! prepare to render up the spoils of thy miserable victim, and to swing on the gallows that is already tired of waiting for thee."

The terrified water-carrier fell on his knees, and made a full relation of the marvellous manner in which he had gained his wealth. The Alcalde, the  
45 *alguazil*, and the inquisitive barber listened with greedy ears to this Arabian

11. *basquina*—petticoat. 12. *bugles*—glass beads. 12. *mantilla*—a woman's light mantle veiling the head and hanging down about the person.

tale of enchanted treasure. The *alguazil* was despatched to bring the Moor who had assisted in the incantation. The Moslem entered, half frightened out of his wits on finding himself in the hands of the harpies of the law. When he beheld the water-carrier standing with sheepish looks and downcast countenance, he comprehended the whole matter. "Miserable animal," said he, as he passed near him, "did I not warn thee against babbling to thy wife?" 5

The story of the Moor coincided exactly with that of his colleague but the Alcalde affected to be slow of belief, and threw out menaces of imprisonment and rigorous investigation.

"Softly, good Señor Alcalde," said the Mussulman, who by this time had recovered his usual shrewdness and self-possession. "Let us not mar fortune's favors in the scramble for them. Nobody knows anything of this matter but ourselves; let us keep the secret. There is wealth enough in the cave to enrich us all. Promise a fair division, and all shall be produced; refuse, and the cave shall remain forever closed." 10 15

The Alcalde consulted apart with the *alguazil*. The latter was an old fox in his profession. "Promise anything," said he, "until you get possession of the treasure. You may then seize upon the whole, and if he and his accomplice dare to murmur, threaten them with the fagot and the stake as infidels and sorcerers." 20

The Alcalde relished the advice. Smoothing his brow and turning to the Moor: "This is a strange story," said he, "and may be true; but I must have ocular proof of it. This very night you must repeat the incantation in my presence. If there be really such treasure, we will share it amicably between us, and say nothing further of the matter; if ye have deceived me, expect no mercy at my hands. In the meantime you must remain in custody." 25

The Moor and the water-carrier cheerfully agreed to these conditions, satisfied that the event would prove the truth of their words.

Towards midnight the Alcalde sallied forth secretly, attended by the *alguazil* and the meddlesome barber, all strongly armed. They conducted the Moor and the water-carrier as prisoners, and were provided with the stout donkey of the latter to bear off the expected treasure. They arrived at the tower without being observed, and tying the donkey to a fig-tree, descended into the fourth vault of the tower. 30

The scroll was produced, the yellow waxen taper lighted, and the Moor read the form of incantation. The earth trembled as before, and the pavement opened with a thundering sound, disclosing the narrow flight of steps. The Alcalde, the *alguazil*, and the barber were struck aghast, and could not summon courage to descend. The Moor and the water-carrier entered the lower vault, and found the two Moors seated as before, silent and motionless. They removed two of the great jars, filled with golden coin and precious stones. The water-carrier bore them up one by one upon his shoulders, but though a strong-backed little man, and accustomed to carry burdens, he staggered beneath their weight, and found, when slung on each side of his donkey, they were as much as the animal could bear. 35 40 45

3. **harpies of the law**—extortioners. In Greek mythology, harpies are man-devouring monsters, half bird, half woman.

"Let us be content for the present," said the Moor; "here is as much treasure as we can carry off without being perceived, and enough to make us all wealthy to our heart's desire."

"Is there more treasure remaining behind?" demanded the Alcalde.

5 "The greatest prize of all," said the Moor, "a huge coffer bound with bands of steel, and filled with pearls and precious stones."

"Let us have up the coffer by all means," cried the grasping Alcalde.

"I will descend for no more," said the Moor, doggedly; "enough is enough for a reasonable man—more is superfluous."

10 "And I," said the water-carrier, "will bring up no further burden to break the back of my poor donkey."

Finding commands, threats, and entreaties equally vain, the Alcalde turned to his two adherents. "Aid me," said he, "to bring up the coffer, and its contents shall be divided between us." So saying, he descended the steps, followed  
15 with trembling reluctance by the *alguazil* and the barber.

No sooner did the Moor behold them fairly earthed than he extinguished the yellow taper; the pavement closed with its usual crash, and the three worthies remained buried in its womb.

He then hastened up the different flights of steps, nor stopped until in the  
20 open air. The little water-carrier followed him as fast as his short legs would permit.

"What hast thou done?" cried Peregil, as soon as he could recover breath. "The Alcalde and the other two are shut up in the vault."

"It is the will of Allah!" said the Moor, devoutly.

25 "And will you not release them?" demanded the Gallego.

"Allah forbid!" replied the Moor, smoothing his beard. "It is written in the book of fate that they shall remain enchanted until some future adventurer arrive to break the charm. The will of God be done!" so saying, he hurled the end of the waxen taper far among the gloomy thickets of the glen.

30 There was now no remedy; so the Moor and the water-carrier proceeded with the richly laden donkey toward the city, nor could honest Peregil refrain from hugging and kissing his long-eared fellow-laborer, thus restored to him from the clutches of the law; and, in fact, it is doubtful which gave the simple-hearted little man most joy at the moment, the gaining of the treasure, or the  
35 recovery of the donkey.

The two partners in good luck divided their spoil amicably and fairly, except that the Moor, who had a little taste for trinketry, made out to get into his heap the most of the pearls and precious stones and other baubles, but then he always gave the water-carrier in lieu magnificent jewels of massy gold, of  
40 five times the size, with which the latter was heartily content. They took care not to linger within reach of accidents, but made off to enjoy their wealth undisturbed in other countries. The Moor returned to Africa, to his native city of Tangiers, and the Gallego, with his wife, his children, and his donkey, made the best of his way to Portugal. Here, under the admonition and tuition of his  
45 wife, he became a personage of some consequence, for she made the worthy little man array his long body and short legs in doublet and hose, with a feather in his hat and a sword by his side, and laying aside his familiar appellation of

Peregil, assume the more sonorous title of Don Pedro Gil: his progeny grew up a thriving and merry-hearted, though short and bandy-legged generation, while Señora Gil, befringed, belaced, and betasseled from her head to her heels, with glittering rings on every finger, became a model of slattern fashion and finery.

5

As to the Alcalde and his adjuncts, they remained shut up under the great Tower of the Seven Floors, and there they remain spellbound at the present day. Whenever there shall be a lack in Spain of pimping barbers, sharking *alguazils*, and corrupt *alcaldes*, they may be sought after; but if they have to wait until such time for their deliverance, there is danger of their enchantment enduring until doomsday.

10

# JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

1789-1851

## I. THE SON OF THE LANDLORD (1789-1826)

- 1789 Born September 15, Burlington, New Jersey, the son of William and Elizabeth Fenimore Cooper.
- 1790 Family removed to the future village of Cooperstown, New York, living first in the "manor house" and later (1799) in Otsego Hall.
- 1799 Sent to Albany for tutoring with the Rev. William Ellison.
- 1800 September 11, death of Hannah Cooper, a favorite sister.
- 1802 Entered Yale College; dismissed in the summer of 1806.
- 1806 Articled to the captain of a merchant vessel sailing to England.
- 1808 Entered the United States navy as a midshipman January 1, being detailed for service on Lake Ontario.
- 1811 May 6, resigned from the service, having married Susan Augusta de Lancey January 1. Lived on the De Lancey estate; afterwards at Cooperstown (at Fenimore Farm).
- 1817 Return to the De Lancey properties near Mamaroneck, New York, living at Angevine. Embarked on various mercantile projects.
- 1820 Published *Precaution* in imitation of contemporary English novels.
- 1821 Published *The Spy*, which established his reputation.
- 1822 Removed to New York City and became active in the Bread and Cheese Club.
- 1823 Published *The Pioneers* (other Leather-stocking stories: *The Last of the Mohicans*, 1826; *The Prairie*, 1827; *The Pathfinder*, 1840; *The Deerslayer*, 1841).
- 1824 Published his first sea story, *The Pilot* (dated 1823).
- 1825 Published *Lionel Lincoln*.
- 1826 Sailed for Europe with his family as titular consul at Lyons.

## II. NOTIONS OF A TRAVELING AMERICAN (1826-1833)

- 1826 July 2, landed in England, but soon went to Paris. Met Lafayette.
- 1828 Published *The Red Rover* and *Notions of the Americans*. Visited England, returned to Paris, and set out for Switzerland July 14. Visited Italy.
- 1829 Published *The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish*.
- 1830 Visited Germany, but returned to Paris after the Revolution of July. Beginning of the "Finance Controversy" over the relative costs of republican and monarchical government, Cooper's *Letter* being published in 1831.
- 1831 Published *The Water-Witch* and *The Bravo*, the latter the first of the "European" novels.
- 1832 Visited Switzerland and Germany. Published *The Heidenmauer*.
- 1833 Published *The Headsman*. Returned to New York November 5.

## III. THE CONTROVERSIALIST (1833-1851)

- 1834 Returned to Cooperstown as a permanent residence. Beginning of critical attacks on Cooper, to which he retorted in *A Letter to His Countrymen* (1834).
- 1835 Published *The Monikins*, a social satire.
- 1836 Published *Sketches of Switzerland* (*Gleanings in Europe*, 6 vols., 1837-1838).
- 1837 Beginning of the "Three Mile Point" controversy and its ensuing lawsuits.
- 1838 Published *The American Democrat*; *The Chronicles of Cooperstown*; *Homeward Bound*; *Home as Found*, the reviews of which caused further lawsuits.
- 1839 Published *The History of the Navy of the United States of America*; controversy followed.
- 1840 Published *Mercedes of Castile*.
- 1842 Published *The Wing-and-Wing*; *The Two Admirals*.
- 1843 Published *Wyandotté*; *Ned Myers*.
- 1844 Published *Afloat and Ashore*.
- 1845 Began the "Rent War" novels: *Satanstoe*, 1845; *The Chainbearer*, 1845; *The Redskins*, 1846. Published *Lives of American Naval Officers*.
- 1847 Published *The Crater*.
- 1848 Published *Jack Tier*; *The Oak Openings*.
- 1849 Published *The Sea Lions*.
- 1850 Published *The Ways of the Hour*.
- 1851 Died September 14.

BIOGRAPHIES: Cooper himself did not wish for a biography. All lives are based upon W. C. Bryant, "Discourse on the Life and Genius of Cooper," New York, 1852, and Susan Fenimore Cooper, *The Cooper Gallery*, New York, 1865. T. R. Lounsbury, *James Fenimore Cooper*, Houghton Mifflin, 1883; W. B. S. Clymer, *James Fenimore Cooper*, Small, Maynard, 1900; M. E. Phillips, *James Fenimore Cooper*, Lane, 1913; H. W. Boynton, *James Fenimore Cooper*, Century, 1931; R. E. Spiller, *Fenimore Cooper, Critic of his Times*, Minton, Balch, 1931; James Grossman, *James Fenimore Cooper*, Sloane, 1949. See also *The Correspondence of James Fenimore Cooper*, Yale University Press, 1922, 2 vols. A special study of importance is Dorothy Waples, *The Whig Myth of James Fenimore Cooper*, Yale, 1938.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND EDITIONS: R. E. Spiller and P. C. Blackburn, *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Writings of James Fenimore Cooper*, Bowker, 1934. See also *Literary History of the United States*, Vol. III, pp. 450-55. The text of Cooper has never been scientifically edited, his popularity and the volume of his writings militating against a definitive edition. See the list of *Collected Works* given in Spiller and Blackburn. The edition of 1859-61, illustrated by Darley, is attractive; the Darley illustrations have been reproduced in other books. There are, of course, innumerable reprints of the Leather-stocking tales. None of the collected editions, however, is complete, the nonfiction being difficult to find. Three modern editions should be noted, however: *Autobiography of a Pocket-Handkerchief*, ed. by W. L. Brown, The Golden-Book Press, 1897; *Gleanings in Europe*, ed. by R. E. Spiller, Oxford Press, 1928-30, 2 vols., and *The American Democrat*, ed. by H. L. Mencken, Knopf, 1931 (Americana Deserta series).

Cooper began by being widely known as the American Scott; he was next denounced as one who, having traveled in Europe, had returned to find fault with his



country; after his death the nineteenth century agreed to regard him as the prose-poet of the American frontier and the American navy; and the present century is interested in him as a social critic. These four phases of the history of his reputation point to four essential aspects of his genius. When he began to write, except for Charles Brockden Brown, the American novel was practically nonexistent; and of his contemporaries Scott had set the world ablaze. Temperamentally incapable of writing social comedy like Jane Austen, Cooper took over the technical virtues and some of the technical deficiencies of the Wizard of the North, and so created for himself a mold of fiction which he was never able to break, even when he desired to write social criticism.

His long sojourn in Europe gave him his first opportunity at a comparative view of society; and his "European" novels, though cast in the conventional mold of a Scott historical romance, are also probings into the European theories of government. In Europe he was the defender of things American; upon his return to America he began, like Henry James after him, to apply the comparative method to contemporary society, and the result was personal unhappiness. Despite the resulting unhappy controversies, he could still keep on with his work; he completed the Leatherstocking series, tried his hand at a novel about Christopher Columbus, and returned to the sea in a series of romances which are today too little known. It is, however, significant that the last important group of novels he was to write—the "Rent War" series—constitute a fictional history of an important social development in New York State. For his real theme—aside from the sea—was American history; in that field he wrote his excellent *History of the Navy*, and in that field he made his most striking success.

In the modern world Cooper is mainly read as the creator of Natty Bumppo and as the author of two or three trenchant books of social criticism. His defects as a narrative artist are patent, and have been pointed out to a wearisome extent. But the author of *The American Democrat* wrote a vigorous prose, and it is impossible that one so competent in controversy could be so bad a stylist as faultfinders make him out to be. His faults are, to a degree not always understood, the faults of his age—of that heavy, rhetorical English which was the stock in trade of the Regency and post-Regency periods. In fiction he was content with dialogue that is uncertain in handling, and with characters that are sometimes no more than puppets. But so was Scott; and like Scott, Cooper is the creator of a few unforgettable characters and of a handful of fictional masterpieces which triumph over their defects by virtue of the rich energy of their creator. Large allowances have to be made for Cooper in reading him, but these being made, he is seen to be one of the four or five masters of the American novel.

## FIVE EPISODES FROM THE LIFE OF LEATHER-STOCKING

*The Leatherstocking Tales* are the fictional biography of an American frontiersman, but they were not originally conceived as a unit, and the order in which they should be read is not the order in which they were written. The concept of the central character, whose "real" name is Nathaniel Bumppo, and who appears as Deerslayer, Hawk-eye, Pathfinder, Leatherstocking, and the nameless trapper of *The Prairie*, varies from novel to novel, as does that of Chingachgook, his Indian companion in four of the books, who is the Indian John of *The Pioneers*. Nevertheless, there is a sufficient unity in the books to justify the presentation of a series of ex-

cerpts from the five novels which will illustrate Leather-stocking's career from his first warfare with the Indians to his death; and these excerpts are arranged in the natural chronological order of the hero's life, rather than the order in which the books were written. The editors have also summarized enough of the plots of the novels to carry the narrative forward.

### THE DEERSLAYER

In *The Deerslayer* Bumpo, on the threshold of his career, comes to Otsego Lake in New York "between the years 1740 and 1745" in company with "Hurry Harry," to visit Muskrat Castle, the house which Tom Hutter has built in the middle of the lake. Bumpo also plans to meet Chingachgook, a young Mohican (Delaware) chief, who intends to visit his Indian betrothed. Hutter and Harry, because of the presence about the lake of hostile Huron Indians in the pay of the French, resolve to land secretly on the shore of the lake and get what scalps they can, leaving Hutter's two daughters, Judith and Hetty, the latter a simple-minded girl, to the care of Deerslayer. The two men are themselves captured, however. But as the whites possess a monopoly of the boats on the lake, the Indians cannot get at the "castle." It is necessary, however, to retain this monopoly, and to this task Deerslayer has set himself during the night preceding the following episode. Besides the "castle," Hutter is also the owner of a kind of house-boat, referred to in the text as the ark.

The text is that of the first American edition (1841). In the case of this chapter, as in that of others, there is a prefatory poetical quotation, which has been omitted in this version.

### CHAPTER VII

DAY HAD fairly dawned before the young man, whom we have left in the situation described in the last chapter, again opened his eyes. This was no sooner done, than he started up, and looked about him with the eagerness of one who suddenly felt the importance of accurately ascertaining his precise position. His rest had been deep and undisturbed; and when he awoke, it was with a clearness of intellect, and a readiness of resources that were much needed at that particular moment. The sun had not risen, it is true, but the vault of heaven was rich with the winning softness that 'brings and shuts the day,' while the whole air was filled with the carols of birds, the hymns of the feathered tribe. These sounds first told Deerslayer the risks he ran. The air, for wind it could scarce be called, was still light, it is true, but it had increased a little in the course of the night, and as the canoes were mere feathers on the water, they had drifted twice the expected distance; and, what was still more dangerous, had approached so near the base of the mountain that here rose precipitously from the eastern shore, as to render the carols of the birds plainly audible. This was not the worst. The third canoe had taken the same direction, and was slowly drifting towards a point where it must inevitably touch, unless turned aside by a shift of wind, or human hands. In other respects, nothing presented itself to attract attention, or to awaken alarm. The castle stood on its shoal, nearly abreast of the canoes, for the drifts had amounted to miles in the course of the night, and the ark lay fastened to its piles, as both had been left so many hours before.

As a matter of course, Deerslayer's attention was first given to the canoe ahead. It was already quite near the point, and a very few strokes of the paddle sufficed to tell him that it must touch before he could possibly overtake it. Just at this moment, too, the wind inopportunately freshened, rendering the drift of the light craft much more rapid and certain. Feeling the impossibility of preventing a contact with the land, the young man wisely determined not to heat himself with unnecessary exertions; but, first looking to the priming of his piece, he proceeded slowly and warily towards the point, taking care to make a little circuit, that he might be exposed on only one side, as he approached.

10 The canoe adrift, being directed by no such intelligence, pursued its proper way, and grounded on a small sunken rock, at the distance of three or four yards from the shore. Just at that moment, Deerslayer had got abreast of the point, and turned the bows of his own boat to the land; first casting loose his tow, that his movements might be unencumbered. The canoe hung an instant  
15 on the rock; then it rose a hair's-breadth on an almost imperceptible swell of the water, swung round, floated clear, and reached the strand. All this the young man noted, but it neither quickened his pulses, nor hastened his hand. If any one had been lying in wait for the arrival of the waif, he must be seen, and the utmost caution in approaching the shore became indispensable; if no  
20 one was in ambush, hurry was unnecessary. The point being nearly diagonally opposite to the Indian encampment, he hoped the last, though the former was not only possible, but probable; for the savages were prompt in adopting all the expedients of their particular modes of warfare, and quite likely had many scouts searching the shores for craft to carry them off to the castle. As a glance  
25 at the lake from any height or projection, would expose the smallest object on its surface, there was little hope that either of the canoes could pass unseen; and Indian sagacity needed no instruction to tell which way a boat or a log would drift, when the direction of the wind was known. As Deerslayer drew nearer and nearer to the land, the stroke of his paddle grew slower, his eye  
30 became more watchful, and his ears and nostrils almost dilated with the effort to detect any lurking danger. 'Twas a trying moment for a novice, nor was there the encouragement which even the timid sometimes feel, when conscious of being observed and commended. He was entirely alone, thrown on his own resources, and was cheered by no friendly eye, emboldened by no encouraging  
35 voice. Notwithstanding all these circumstances, the most experienced veteran in forest warfare could not have conducted better. Equally free from recklessness and hesitation, his advance was marked by a sort of philosophical prudence, that appeared to render him superior to all motives but those which were best calculated to effect his purpose. Such was the commencement of a  
40 career in forest exploits, that afterwards rendered this man, in his way, and under the limits of his habits and opportunities, as renowned as many a hero whose name has adorned the pages of works more celebrated than legends simple as ours can ever become.

When about a hundred yards from the shore, Deerslayer rose in the canoe,

**1-2. canoe ahead**—a canoe which had been recovered from its hiding-place in the woods, and set adrift to prevent its falling into the hands of the Hurons. When the chapter opens, Deerslayer is in a second canoe, which is towing still a third.

gave three or four vigorous strokes with the paddle, sufficient of themselves to impel the bark to land, and then quickly laying aside the instrument of labour, he seized that of war. He was in the very act of raising the rifle, when a sharp report was followed by the buzz of a bullet that passed so near his body, as to cause him involuntarily to start. The next instant Deerslayer staggered, and fell his whole length in the bottom of the canoe. A yell—it came from a single voice—followed, and an Indian leaped from the bushes upon the open area of the point, bounding towards the canoe. This was the moment the young man desired. He rose on the instant, and levelled his own rifle at his uncovered foe; but his finger hesitated about pulling the trigger on one whom he held at such a disadvantage. This little delay, probably, saved the life of the Indian, who bounded back into the cover as swiftly as he had broken out of it. In the meantime Deerslayer had been swiftly approaching the land, and his own canoe reached the point just as his enemy disappeared. As its movements had not been directed, it touched the shore a few yards from the other boat; and though the rifle of his foe had to be loaded, there was not time to secure his prize, and to carry it beyond danger, before he would be exposed to another shot. Under the circumstances, therefore, he did not pause an instant, but dashed into the woods and sought a cover.

On the immediate point there was a small open area, partly in native grass, and partly beach, but a dense fringe of bushes lined its upper side. This narrow belt of dwarf vegetation passed, one issued immediately into the high and gloomy vaults of the forest. The land was tolerably level for a few hundred feet, and then it rose precipitously in a mountain-side. The trees were tall, large, and so free from under-brush, that they resembled vast columns, irregularly scattered, upholding a dome of leaves. Although they stood tolerably close together, for their ages and size, the eye could penetrate to considerable distances; and bodies of men, even, might have engaged beneath their cover, with concert and intelligence.

Deerslayer knew that his adversary must be employed in re-loading, unless he had fled. The former proved to be the case, for the young man had no sooner placed himself behind a tree, than he caught a glimpse of the arm of the Indian, his body being concealed by an oak, in the very act of forcing the leathered bullet home. Nothing would have been easier than to spring forward, and decide the affair by a close assault on his unprepared foe; but every feeling of Deerslayer revolted at such a step, although his own life had just been attempted from a cover. He was yet unpractised in the ruthless expedients of savage warfare, of which he knew nothing except by tradition and theory, and it struck him as an unfair advantage to assail an unarmed foe. His colour had heightened, his eye frowned, his lips were compressed, and all his energies were collected and ready; but instead of advancing to fire, he dropped his rifle to the usual position of a sportsman in readiness to catch his aim, and muttered to himself, unconscious that he was speaking—

“No, no—that may be red-skin warfare, but it’s not a Christian’s gifts. Let the miscreant charge, and then we’ll take it out like men; for the canoe he *must* not, and *shall* not have. No, no; let him have time to load, and God will take care of the right!”

All this time the Indian had been so intent on his own movements, that he was even ignorant that his enemy was in the wood. His only apprehension was, that the canoe would be recovered and carried away, before he might be in readiness to prevent it. He had sought the cover from habit, but was within  
5 a few feet of the fringe of bushes, and could be at the margin of the forest, in readiness to fire, in a moment. The distance between him and his enemy was about fifty yards, and the trees were so arranged by nature that the line of sight was not interrupted, except by the particular trees behind which each party stood.

10 His rifle was no sooner loaded, than the savage glanced around him, and advanced incautiously as regarded the real, but stealthily as respected the fancied position of his enemy, until he was fairly exposed. Then Deerslayer stepped from behind his own cover, and hailed him.

"This-a-way, red-skin; this-a-way, if you're looking for me," he called out.  
15 "I'm young in war, but not so young as to stand on an open beach to be shot down like an owl, by day-light. It rests on yourself whether it's peace, or war, atween us; for my gifts are white gifts, and I'm not one of them that thinks it valiant to slay human mortals, singly, in the woods."

The savage was a good deal startled by this sudden discovery of the danger  
20 he ran. He had a little knowledge of English, however, and caught the drift of the other's meaning. He was also too well schooled to betray alarm, but, dropping the butt of his rifle to the earth, with an air of confidence, he made a gesture of lofty courtesy. All this was done with the ease and self-possession of one accustomed to consider no man his superior. In the midst of this con-  
25 summate acting, however, the volcano that raged within caused his eyes to glare, and his nostrils to dilate, like those of some wild beast that is suddenly prevented from taking the fatal leap.

"Two canoe," he said, in the deep guttural tones of his race, holding up the number of fingers he mentioned, by way of preventing mistakes; "one for  
30 you—one for me."

"No, no, Mingo, that will never do. You own neither; and neither shall you have, as long as I can prevent it. I know it's war atween your people and mine, but that's no reason why human mortals should slay each other, like savage creatur's that meet in the woods; go your way, then, and leave me to go mine.  
35 The world is large enough for us both; and when we meet fairly in battle, why, the Lord will order the fate of each of us."

"Good!" exclaimed the Indian; "my brother missionary—great talk; all about Manitou."

"Not so—not so, warrior. I'm not good enough for the Moravians, and am  
40 too good for most of the other vagabonds that preach about in the woods. No, no, I'm only a hunter, as yet, though afore the peace is made, 'tis like enough there'll be occasion to strike a blow at some of your people. Still, I wish it to be done in fair fight, and not in a quarrel about the ownership of a miserable canoe."

45 "Good! My brother very young—but he very wise. Little warrior—great talker. Chief, sometimes, in council."

"I don't know this, nor do I say it, Indian," returned Deerslayer, colouring a

little at the ill-concealed sarcasm of the other's manner; "I look forward to a life in the woods, and I only hope it may be a peaceable one. All young men must go on the war-path, when there's occasion, but war isn't needfully massacre. I've seen enough of the last, this very night, to know that Providence frowns on it; and I now invite you to go your own way, while I go mine; and hope that we may part fri'nds."

"Good! My brother has two scalp—grey hair under t'other. Old wisdom—  
young tongue."

Here the savage advanced with confidence, his hand extended, his face smiling, and his whole bearing denoting amity and respect. Deerslayer met his offered friendship in a proper spirit, and they shook hands cordially, each endeavouring to assure the other of his sincerity and desire to be at peace.

"All have his own," said the Indian; "my canoe, mine; your canoe, your'n. Go look; if your'n, you keep; if mine, I keep."

"That's just, red-skin; though you must be wrong in thinking the canoe your property. Howsoever, seein' is believin', and we'll go down to the shore, where you may look with your own eyes; for it's likely you'll object to trustin' altogether to mine."

The Indian uttered his favourite exclamation of "good!" and then they walked, side by side, towards the shore. There was no apparent distrust in the manner of either, the Indian moving in advance, as if he wished to show his companion that he did not fear turning his back to him. As they reached the open ground, the former pointed towards Deerslayer's boat, and said emphatically—

"No mine—pale-face canoe. *This* red-man's. No want other man's canoe—  
want his own."

"You're wrong, red-skin, you're altogether wrong. This canoe was left in old Hutter's keeping, and is his'n, according to all law, red or white, till its owner comes to claim it. Here's the seats and the stitching of the bark to speak for themselves. No man ever know'd an Indian to turn off such work."

"Good! My brother little old—big wisdom. Indian no make him. White man's work."

"I'm glad you think so, for holding out to the contrary might have made ill blood atween us; every one having a right to take possession of his own. I'll just shove the canoe out of reach of dispute, at once, as the quickest way of settling difficulties."

While Deerslayer was speaking, he put a foot against the end of the light boat, and giving a vigorous shove, he sent it out into the lake a hundred feet or more, where, taking the true current, it would necessarily float past the point, and be in no further danger of coming ashore. The savage started at this ready and decided expedient, and his companion saw that he cast a hurried and fierce glance at his own canoe, or that which contained the paddles. The change of manner, however, was but momentary, and then the Iroquois resumed his air of friendliness, and a smile of satisfaction.

"Good!" he repeated, with stronger emphasis than ever. "Young head, old mind. Know how to settle quarrel. Farewell, brother. He go to house in water—muskrat house—Indian go to camp; tell chiefs no find canoe."

Deerslayer was not sorry to hear this proposal, for he felt anxious to join the females, and he took the offered hand of the Indian very willingly. The parting words were friendly; and, while the red-man walked calmly towards the wood, with the rifle in the hollow of his arm, without once looking back  
5 in uneasiness or distrust, the white man moved towards the remaining canoe, carrying his piece in the same pacific manner, it is true, but keeping his eyes fastened on the movements of the other. This distrust, however, seemed to be altogether uncalled for, and, as if ashamed to have entertained it, the young man averted his look, and stepped carelessly up to his boat. Here he began to  
10 push the canoe from the shore, and to make his other preparations for departing. He might have been thus employed a minute, when, happening to turn his face towards the land, his quick and certain eye told him, at a glance, the imminent jeopardy in which his life was placed. The black, ferocious eyes of the savage were glancing on him, like those of the crouching tiger, through a  
15 small opening in the bushes, and the muzzle of his rifle seemed already to be opening in a line with his own body.

Then, indeed, the long practice of Deerslayer, as a hunter, did him good service. Accustomed to fire with the deer on the bound, and often when the precise position of the animal's body had in a manner to be guessed at, he used  
20 the same expedients here. To cock and poise his rifle were the acts of a single moment, and a single motion; then, aiming almost without sighting, he fired into the bushes where he knew a body ought to be, in order to sustain the appalling countenance, which alone was visible. There was not time to raise the piece any higher, or to take a more deliberate aim. So rapid were his move-  
25 ments, that both parties discharged their pieces at the same instant, the concussions mingling in one report. The mountains, indeed, gave back but a single echo. Deerslayer dropped his piece, and stood, with head erect, steady as one of the pines in the calm of a June morning, watching the result; while the savage gave the yell that has become historical for its appalling influence,  
30 leaped through the bushes, and came bounding across the open ground, flourishing a tomahawk. Still Deerslayer moved not, but stood with his unloaded rifle fallen against his shoulders, while, with a hunter's habits, his hands were mechanically feeling for the powder-horn and charger. When about forty feet from his enemy, the savage hurled his keen weapon; but it was with an  
35 eye so vacant, and a hand so unsteady and feeble, that the young man caught it by the handle, as it was flying past him. At that instant the Indian staggered and fell his whole length on the ground.

"I know'd it—I know'd it!" exclaimed Deerslayer, who was already preparing to force a fresh bullet into his rifle; "I know'd it must come to this,  
40 as soon as I had got the range from the creatur's eyes. A man sights suddenly, and fires quick, when his own life's in danger; yes, I know'd it would come to this. I was about the hundredth part of a second too quick for him, or it might have been bad for me! The riptyle's bullet has just grazed my side—but, say what you will, for or ag'in 'em, a red-skin is by no means as sartain  
45 with powder and ball as a white man. Their gifts don't seem to lie that-a-way. Even Chingachgook, great as he is in other matters, is'n't downright deadly with the rifle."

By this time the piece was reloaded, and Deerslayer, after tossing the tomahawk into the canoe, advanced to his victim, and stood over him, leaning on his rifle, in melancholy attention. It was the first instance in which he had seen a man fall in battle—it was the first fellow-creature against whom he had ever seriously raised his own hand. The sensations were novel; and regret, with the freshness of our better feelings, mingled with his triumph. The Indian was not dead, though shot directly through the body. He lay on his back motionless, but his eyes, now full of consciousness, watched each action of his victor—as the fallen bird regards the fowler—jealous of every movement. The man probably expected the fatal blow which was to precede the loss of his scalp; or, perhaps he anticipated that this latter act of cruelty would precede his death. Deerslayer read his thoughts; and he found a melancholy satisfaction in relieving the apprehensions of the helpless savage.

“No, no, red-skin,” he said; “you’ve nothing more to fear from me. I am of a Christian stock, and scalping is not of my gifts. I’ll just make sartin of your rifle, and then come back and do you what sarvice I can. Though here I can’t stay much longer, as the crack of three rifles will be apt to bring some of your devils down upon me.”

The close of this was said in a sort of a soliloquy, as the young man went in quest of the fallen rifle. The piece was found where its owner had dropped it, and was immediately put into the canoe. Laying his own rifle at its side, Deerslayer then returned and stood over the Indian again.

“All inimity atween you and me’s at an ind, red-skin,” he said; “and you may set your heart at rest, on the score of the scalp, or any further injury. My gifts are white, as I’ve told you; and I hope my conduct will be white also!”

Could looks have conveyed all they meant, it is probable Deerslayer’s innocent vanity, on the subject of colour would have been rebuked a little; but he comprehended the gratitude that was expressed in the eyes of the dying savage, without in the least detecting the bitter sarcasm that struggled with the better feeling.

“Water!” ejaculated the thirsty and unfortunate creature; “give poor Indian water.”

“Ay, water you shall have, if you drink the lake dry. I’ll just carry you down to it, that you may take your fill. This is the way, they tell me, with all wounded people—water is their greatest comfort and delight.”

So saying, Deerslayer raised the Indian in his arms, and carried him to the lake. Here he first helped him to take an attitude in which he could appease his burning thirst; after which he seated himself on a stone, and took the head of his wounded adversary in his own lap, and endeavoured to soothe his anguish, in the best manner he could.

“It would be sinful in me to tell you your time hadn’t come, warrior,” he commenced, “and therefore I’ll not say it. You’ve passed the middle age, already, and, considerin’ the sort of lives ye lead, your days have been pretty well filled. The principal thing, now, is to look forward to what comes next. Neither red-skin nor pale-face, on the whole, calculates much on sleepin’ for ever; but both expect to live in another world. Each has his gifts, and will



be judged by 'em, and, I suppose, you've thought these matters over enough, not to stand in need of sarmons, when the trial comes. You'll find your happy hunting-grounds, if you've been a just Indian; if an unjust, you'll meet your desarts in another way. I've my own idees about these things; but you're too  
5 old and exper'enced to need any explanations from one as young as I."

"Good!" ejaculated the Indian, whose voice retained its depth even as life ebbed away; "young head—old wisdom!"

"It's sometimes a consolation, when the ind comes, to know that them we've harmed, or *tried* to harm, forgive us. I suppose natur' seeks this relief,  
10 by way of getting a pardon on 'arth; as we never can know whether He pardons, who is all in all, till judgment itself comes. It's soothing to know that *any* pardon, at such times; and that, I conclude, is the secret. Now, as for myself, I overlook altogether your designs ag'in my life; first, because no harm came of 'em; next, because it's your gifts, and natur', and trainin',  
15 and I ought not to have trusted you at all; and, finally and chiefly, because I can bear no ill-will to a dying man, whether heathen or Christian. So put your heart at ease, so far as I'm consarned; you know best what other matters ought to trouble you, or what ought to give you satisfaction, in so trying a moment."

20 It is probable that the Indian had some of the fearful glimpses of the unknown state of being which God, in mercy, seems, at times, to afford to all the human race; but they were necessarily in conformity with his habits and prejudices. Like most of his people, and like too many of our own, he thought more of dying in a way to gain applause among those he left, than to secure  
25 a better state of existence, hereafter. While Deerslayer was speaking, his mind was a little bewildered, though he felt that the intention was good; and when he had done, a regret passed over his spirit that none of his own tribe were present to witness his stoicism, under extreme bodily suffering, and the firmness with which he met his end. With the high, innate courtesy that so often  
30 distinguishes the Indian warrior, before he becomes corrupted by too much intercourse with the worst class of the white men, he endeavoured to express his thankfulness for the other's good intentions, and to let him understand that they were appreciated.

"Good!" he repeated, for this was an English word much used by the  
35 savages—"good—young head; young *heart*, too. *Old* heart tough; no shed tear. Hear Indian when he die, and no want to lie—what he call him?"

"Deerslayer is the name I bear now, though the Delawares have said that when I get back from this war-path I shall have a more manly title, provided I can 'arn one."

40 "That good name for boy—poor name for warrior. He get better quick. No fear *there*"—the savage had strength sufficient, under the strong excitement he felt, to raise a hand and tap the young man on his breast—"eye sartain—finger lightening—aim, death—great warrior, soon. No Deerslayer—Hawkeye—Hawkeye—Hawkeye. Shake hand."

45 Deerslayer—or Hawkeye, as the youth was then first named, for in after years he bore the appellation throughout all that region—Deerslayer took the hand of the savage, whose last breath was drawn in that attitude, gazing in

admiration at the countenance of a stranger, who had shown so much readiness, skill and firmness, in a scene that was equally trying and novel. When the reader remembers it is the highest gratification an Indian can receive to see his enemy betray weakness, he will be better able to appreciate the conduct which had extorted so great a concession, at such a moment.

"His spirit has fled!" said Deerslayer, in a suppressed, melancholy voice. "Ah's me!—Well, to this we must all come, sooner or later; and he is happiest, let his skin be of what colour it may, who is best fitted to meet it. Here lies the body of, no doubt, a brave warrior, and the soul is already flying towards its heaven, or hell, whether that be a happy hunting-ground, a place scant of game; regions of glory, according to the Moravian doctrine, or flames of fire! So it happens, too, as regards other matters! Here have old Hutter and Hurry Harry got themselves into difficulty, if they haven't got themselves into torment and death, and all for a bounty that luck offers to me in what many would think a lawful and suitable manner. But not a farthing of such money shall cross my hand. White I was born, and white will I die; clinging to colour to the last, even though the King's Majesty, his governors, and all his councils, both at home and in the Colonies, forget from what they come, and where they hope to go, and all for a little advantage in warfare. No, no—warrior; hand of mine shall never molest your scalp, and so your soul may rest in peace on the p'int of making a decent appearance, when the body comes to join it, in your own land of spirits."

Deerslayer arose as soon as he had spoken. Then he placed the body of the dead man in a sitting posture, with its back against the little rock, taking the necessary care to prevent it from falling, or in any way settling into an attitude that might be thought unseemly by the sensitive, though wild notions of a savage. When this duty was performed, the young man stood gazing at the grim countenance of his fallen foe, in a sort of melancholy abstraction. As was his practice, however, a habit gained by living so much alone in the forest, he then began again to give utterance to his thoughts and feelings aloud.

"I didn't wish your life, red-skin," he said, "but you left me no choice between killing, or being killed. Each party acted according to his gifts, I suppose, and blame can light on neither. You were treacherous, according to your natur' in war, and I was a little oversightful, as I'm apt to be in trusting others. Well, this is my first battle with a human mortal, though it's not likely to be the last. I have fou't most of the creatur's of the forest, such as bears, wolves, painters and catamounts, but this is the beginning with the red-skins. If I was Indian born, now, I might tell of this, or carry in the scalp, and boast of the expl'ite afore the whole tribe; or, if my inimy had only been even a bear, 'twould have been nat'ral and proper to let every body know what had happened; but I don't well see how I'm to let even Chingachgook into this secret, so long as it can be done only by boasting with a white tongue. And why should I wish to boast of it, after all? It's slaying a human, although he was a savage; and how do I know that he was a just Indian; and that he has not been taken away suddenly, to any thing but happy hunting-grounds. When it's onsartain whether good or evil has been done, the wisest way is

not to be boastful—still, I *should* like Chingachgook to know that I haven't discredited the Delawares, or my training!" . . .

## THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS

In *The Last of the Mohicans* the capture of the British Fort William Henry on Lake George by the French General Montcalm in 1757 is the historical fact around which the tale revolves. Bumpo is now known as Hawk-eye. In the opening chapters he succeeds in getting a party of whites into the fort before it is besieged. This party is composed of Alice and Cora Munro, daughters of the commander of the fort, Major Duncan Heyward, the lover of Alice, and David Gamut, a wandering New England singing teacher. In this enterprise Hawk-eye is aided by Chingachgook and his son Uncas, and is impeded by hostile Huron Indians, whose leader is Magua, also known as Le Renard Subtil (The Cunning Fox). After the capture of Fort William Henry and the subsequent massacre of numbers of the besieged by the Indians, Magua takes Alice and Cora prisoner. The friends and relatives of the two women follow upon their trail to rescue them; and after many startling adventures, Alice is released through the intervention of a tribe of Delaware Indians with whom Uncas claims kin. Indian justice, however, permits Magua to depart unharmed with Cora; but immediately he is out of the Delaware village, the Delawares pursue him under the leadership of Uncas and Hawk-eye, accompanied by Heyward and Chingachgook. The terrain on which the events of the following selection take place is needlessly complicated in the description; and it is sufficient to understand that a surprise attack on the Hurons by the several bands of Delaware Indians is in progress.

The text is that of the first American edition (1826), in two volumes. The present chapter is XV of the second volume but in the usual edition of the book has its present number.

### CHAPTER XXXII

- During the time Uncas was making this disposition of his forces, the woods were as still, and, with the exception of those who had met in council, apparently, as much untenanted, as when they came fresh from the hands of their Almighty Creator. The eye could range, in every direction, through the long and shadowed vistas of the trees; but no where was any object to be seen, that did not properly belong to the peaceful and slumbering scenery. Here and there a bird was heard fluttering among the branches of the beeches, and occasionally a squirrel dropped a nut, drawing the startled looks of the party, for a moment, to the place; but the instant the casual interruption ceased, the passing air was heard murmuring above their heads, along that verdant and undulating surface of forest, which spread itself unbroken, unless by stream or lake, over such a vast region of country. Across the tract of wilderness, which lay between the Delawares and the village of their enemies, it seemed as if the foot of man had never trodden, so breathing and deep was the silence in which it lay. But Hawk-eye, whose duty led him foremost in the adventure, knew the character of those with whom he was about to contend, too well, to trust the treacherous quiet.
- When he saw his little band again collected, the scout threw "kill-deer" into

the hollow of his arm, and making a silent signal that he would be followed, he led them many rods towards the rear, into the bed of a little brook, which they had crossed in advancing. Here he halted, and after waiting for the whole of his grave and attentive warriors to close about him, he spoke in Delaware, demanding—

“Do any of my young men know whither this run will lead us?”

A Delaware stretched forth a hand, with the two fingers separated, and indicating the manner in which they were joined at the root, he answered—

“Before the sun could go his own length, the little water will be in the big.” Then he added, pointing in the direction of the place he mentioned, “the two make enough for the beavers.”

“I thought as much,” returned the scout, glancing his eye upward at the opening in the tree-tops, “from the course it takes, and the bearings of the mountains. Men, we will keep within the cover of its banks till we scent the Hurons.”

His companions gave the usual brief exclamation of assent, but perceiving that their leader was about to lead the way, in person, one or two made signs that all was not as it should be. Hawk-eye, who comprehended their meaning glances, turned, and perceived that his party had been followed thus far by the singing-master.

“Do you know, friend,” asked the scout gravely, and perhaps with a little of the pride of conscious deserving in his manner, “that this is a band of rangers, chosen for the most desperate service, and put under the command of one, who, though another might say it with a better face, will not be apt to leave them idle. It may not be five, it cannot be thirty, minutes before we tread on the body of a Huron, living or dead.”

“Though not admonished of your intentions in words,” returned David, whose face was a little flushed, and whose ordinarily quiet and unmeaning eyes glimmered with an expression of unusual fire, “your men have reminded me of the children of Jacob going out to battle against the Shechemites, for wickedly aspiring to wedlock with a woman of a race that was favoured of the Lord. Now, I have journeyed far, and sojourned much, in good and evil, with the maiden ye seek; and, though not a man of war, with my loins girded and my sword sharpened, yet would I gladly strike a blow in her behalf.”

The scout hesitated, as if weighing the chances of such a strange enlistment in his mind before he answered—

“You know not the use of any we’pon. You carry no rifle; and believe me, what the Mingoes take they will freely give again.”

“Though not a vaunting and bloodily disposed Goliath,” returned David, drawing a sling from beneath his parti-coloured and uncouth attire, “I have not forgotten the example of the Jewish boy. With this ancient instrument of war have I practised much in my youth, and peradventure the skill has not entirely departed from me.”

“Ay!” said Hawk-eye, considering the deer-skin thong and apron, with a cold and discouraging eye; “the thing might do its work among arrows, or

30. Jacob . . . Shechemites—Cf. Gen. 34. 38. Mingoes—the Hurons. 39. Goliath—See the story of David and Goliath, I Sam. 17.

even knives; but these Mengwe have been furnished by the Frenchers with a good grooved barrel a man. However, it seems to be your gift to go unharmed amid a fire; and as you have hitherto been favoured—Major, you have left your rifle at a cock; a single shot before the time would be just  
5 twenty scalps lost to no purpose—Singer, you can follow; we may find use for you in the shoutings.”

“I thank you, friend,” returned David, supplying himself, like his royal namesake, from among the pebbles of the brook, “though not given to the desire to kill, had you sent me away, my spirit would have been troubled.”

10 “Remember,” added the scout, tapping his own head significantly on that spot where Gamut was yet sore, “we come to fight, and not to musickate. Until the general whoop is given, nothing speaks but the rifle.”

David nodded, as much as to signify his acquiescence with the terms, and then Hawk-eye, casting another observant glance over his followers, made the  
15 signal to proceed.

This route lay, for the distance of a mile, along the bed of the water course. Though protected from any great danger of observation by the precipitous banks, and the thick shrubbery which skirted the stream, for the whole distance, no precaution, known to an Indian attack, was neglected. A warrior  
20 rather crawled than walked on each flank, so as to catch occasional glimpses into the forest; and every few minutes the band came to a halt, and listened for hostile sounds, with an acuteness of organs, that would be scarcely conceivable to a man in a less natural state. Their march was, however, unmolested, and they reached the point where the lesser stream was lost in the  
25 greater, without the smallest evidence that their progress had been noted. Here the scout again halted, to consult the signs of the forest.

“We are likely to have a good day for a fight,” he said, in English, addressing Heyward, and glancing his eye upwards at the clouds, which began to move in broad sheets across the firmament; “a bright sun and a glittering  
30 barrel are no friends to true sight. Everything is favourable; they have the wind, which will bring down their noises and their smoke too, no little matter in itself; whereas, with us, it will be first a shot and then a clear view. But here is an end of our cover; the beavers have had the range of this stream for hundreds of years, and what atween their food and their dams, there is,  
35 as you see, many a girdled stub, but few living trees.”

Hawk-eye had, in truth, in these few words, given no bad description of the prospect that now lay in their front. The brook was irregular in its width, sometimes shooting through narrow fissures in the rocks, and at others, spreading over acres of bottom land, forming little areas that might be termed ponds.  
40 Every where along its banks were the mouldering relics of dead trees, in all the stages of decay, from those that groaned on their tottering trunks, to such as had recently been robbed of those rugged coats that so mysteriously contain their principle of life. A few long, low, and moss covered piles were scattered among them, like the memorials of a former and long departed generation.

45 All these minute particulars were now noted by the scout, with a gravity

1. **Mengwe**—the same as Mingoes. 3. **a**—omitted in later editions. 3. **Major**—that is, Heyward, a major in the Royal Americans.

and interest, that they probably had never before attracted. He knew that the Huron encampment lay a short half mile up the brook, and, with the characteristic anxiety of one who dreaded a hidden danger, he was greatly troubled at not finding the smallest trace of the presence of his enemy. Once or twice he felt induced to give the order for a rush, and to attempt the village by surprise; but his experience quickly admonished him of the danger of so useless an experiment. Then he listened intently, and with painful uncertainty, for the sounds of hostility in the quarter where Uncas was left; but nothing was audible except the sighing of the wind, that began to sweep over the bosom of the forest in gusts, which threatened a tempest. At length, yielding rather to his unusual impatience, than taking counsel from his knowledge, he determined to bring matters to an issue, by unmasking his force, and proceeding cautiously, but steadily, up the stream.

The scout had stood, while making his observations, sheltered by a brake, and his companions still lay in the bed of the ravine, through which the smaller stream debouched; but on hearing his low, though intelligible signal, the whole party stole up the bank, like so many dark spectres, and silently arranged themselves around him. Pointing in the direction he wished to proceed, Hawk-eye advanced, the band breaking off in single files, and following so accurately in his footsteps, as to leave, if we except Heyward and David, the trail of but a single man.

The party was, however, scarcely uncovered, before a volley from a dozen rifles was heard in their rear, and a Delaware leaping high into the air, like a wounded deer, fell at his whole length, perfectly dead.

"Ah! I feared some devilry like this!" exclaimed the scout, in English; adding, with the quickness of thought, in his adopted tongue, "to cover[,] men, and charge!"

The band dispersed at the word, and before Heyward had well recovered from his surprise, he found himself standing alone with David. Luckily, the Hurons had already fallen back, and he was safe from their fire. But this state of things was evidently to be of short continuance, for the scout set the example of pressing on their retreat, by discharging his rifle, and darting from tree to tree, as his enemy slowly yielded ground.

It would seem that the assault had been made by a very small party of the Hurons, which, however, continued to increase in numbers, as it retired on its friends, until the return fire was very nearly, if not quite, equal to that maintained by the advancing Delawares. Heyward threw himself among the combatants, and imitating the necessary caution of his companions, he supported quick discharges with his own rifle. The contest now grew warm and stationary. Few were injured, as both parties kept their bodies as much protected as possible by the trees; never, indeed, exposing any part of their persons, except in the act of taking aim. But the chances were gradually growing unfavourable to Hawk-eye and his band. The quick sighted scout perceived all his danger, without knowing how to remedy it. He saw it was more dangerous to retreat than to maintain his ground; while he found his enemy throwing out men on his flank, which rendered the task of keeping themselves covered so very difficult to the Delawares, as nearly to silence their fire.

At this embarrassing moment, when they began to think the whole of the hostile tribe was gradually encircling them, to their destruction, they heard the yell of combatants, and the rattling of arms, echoing under the arches of the wood, at the place where Uncas was posted; a bottom which, in a manner, lay beneath the ground on which Hawk-eye and his party were contending.

The effects of this attack were instantaneous, and to the scout and his friends greatly relieving. It would seem that, while his own surprise had been anticipated, and had consequently failed, the enemy, in their turn, having been deceived in its object and in his numbers, had left too small a force to resist the impetuous onset of the young Mohican. This fact was doubly apparent, by the rapid manner in which the battle in the forest rolled upward towards the village, and by an instant falling off in the number of their assailants, who rushed to assist in maintaining their front, and, as it now proved to be, their principal point of defence.

Animating his followers by his voice, and his own example, Hawk-eye then gave the word to bear down upon their foes. The charge, in that rude species of warfare, consisted merely in pushing from cover to cover, nigher to the enemy; and in this manoeuvre he was instantly and successfully obeyed. The Hurons were compelled to withdraw, and the scene of the contest rapidly changed from the more open ground on which it had commenced, to a spot where the assailed found a thicket to rest upon. Here the struggle was protracted, arduous, and, seemingly, of doubtful issue. The Delawares, though none of them fell, beginning to bleed freely, in consequence of the disadvantage at which they were held.

In this crisis, Hawk-eye found means to get behind the same tree, as that which served for a cover to Heyward; most of his own combatants being within call, a little on his right, where they maintained rapid, though fruitless, discharges on their sheltered enemies.

"You are a young man, major," said the scout, dropping the butt of 'kill-deer' to the earth, and leaning on the barrel, a little fatigued with his previous industry; "and it may be your gift to lead armies, at some future day, ag'in these imps, the Mingoes. You may here see the philosophy of an Indian fight. It consists, mainly, in a ready hand, a quick eye, and a good cover. Now, if you had a company of the Royal Americans here, in what manner would you set them to work in this business?"

"The bayonet would make a road."

"Ay, there is white reason in what you say; but a man must ask himself, in this wilderness, how many lives he can spare. No—horse," continued the scout, shaking his head, like one who mused; "horse, I am ashamed to say, must, sooner or later, decide these skrimmages. The brutes are better than men, and to horse must we come at last! Put a shodden hoof on the moccasin of a red-skin, and if his rifle be once emptied, he will never stop to load it again."

"This is a subject that might better be discussed another time," returned Heyward; "shall we charge?"

"I see no contradiction to the gifts of any man, in passing his breathing

spells in useful reflections," the scout mildly replied. "As to a rush, I little relish such a measure, for a scalp or two must be thrown away in the attempt. And yet," he added, bending his head aside, to catch the sounds of the distant combat, "if we are to be of use to Uncas, these knaves in our front must be now gotten rid of!"

Then turning, with a prompt and decided air, from Duncan, he called aloud to his Indians, in their own language. His words were answered by a shout, and at a given signal, each warrior made a swift movement around his particular tree. The sight of so many dark bodies, glancing before their eyes at the same instant, drew a hasty, and, consequently, an ineffectual fire from the Hurons. Then, without stopping to breathe, the Delawares leaped, in long bounds, towards the wood, like so many panthers springing upon their prey. Hawk-eye was in front, brandishing his terrible rifle, and animating his followers by his example. A few of the older and more cunning Hurons, who had not been deceived by the artifice which had been practised to draw their fire, now made a close and deadly discharge of their pieces, and justified the apprehensions of the scout, by felling three of his foremost warriors. But the shock was insufficient to repel the impetus of the charge. The Delawares broke into the cover, with the ferocity of their natures, and swept away every trace of resistance by the fury of the onset.

The combat endured only for an instant, hand to hand, and then the assailed yielded ground rapidly, until they reached the opposite margin of the thicket, where they clung to their cover, with the sort of obstinacy that is so often witnessed in hunted brutes. At this critical moment, when the success of the struggle was again becoming doubtful, the crack of a rifle was heard behind the Hurons, and a bullet came whizzing from among some beaver lodges, which were situated in the clearing, in their rear, and was followed by the fierce and appalling yell of the war-whoop.

"There speaks the Sagamore!" shouted Hawk-eye, answering the cry with his own stentorian voice; "we have them now in face and back!"

The effect on the Hurons was instantaneous. Discouraged by so unexpected an assault, from a quarter that left them no opportunity for cover, their warriors uttered a common yell of disappointment and despair, and breaking off in a body, they spread themselves across the opening, heedless of every other consideration but flight. Many fell, in making the experiment, under the bullets and the blows of the pursuing Delawares.

We shall not pause to detail the meeting between the scout and Chingachgook, or the more touching interview that Duncan held with the anxious father of his mistress. A few brief and hurried words served to explain the state of things to both parties; and then Hawk-eye, pointing out the Sagamore to his band, resigned the chief authority into the hands of the Mohican chief. Chingachgook assumed the station to which his birth and experience gave him so distinguished a claim, with the grave dignity that always gives force to the mandates of a native warrior. Following the footsteps of the scout, he led the party back through the thicket, his men scalping the fallen Hurons, and secret-

29. Sagamore—chief, that is, Chingachgook, the father of Uncas. 39. father—that is, Colonel Munro.



ing the bodies of their own dead as they proceeded, until they gained a point where the former was content to make a halt.

The warriors who had breathed themselves so freely in the preceding struggle, were now posted on a bit of level ground, sprinkled with trees, in sufficient numbers to conceal them. The land fell off rather precipitously in front, and beneath their eyes stretched, for several miles, a narrow, dark, and wooded vale. It was through this dense and dark forest, that Uncas was still contending with the main body of the Hurons.

The Mohican and his friends advanced to the brow of the hill, and listened, with practised ears, to the sounds of the combat. A few birds hovered over the leafy bosom of the valley, as if frightened from their secluded nests, and here and there a light vapoury cloud, which seemed already blending with the atmosphere, arose above the trees, and indicated some spot where the struggle had been more fierce and stationary than usual.

"The fight is coming up the ascent," said Duncan, pointing in the direction of a new explosion of fire-arms; "we are too much in the centre of their line to be effective."

"They will incline into the hollow, where the cover is thicker," said the scout, "and that will leave us well on their flank. Go, Sagamore; you will hardly be in time to give the whoop, and lead on the young men. I will fight this skirmish with warriors of my own colour! You know me, Mohican; not a Huron of them all shall cross the swell, into your rear, without the notice of 'kill-deer.'"

The Indian chief paused another moment to consider the signs of the contest, which was now rolling rapidly up the ascent, a certain evidence that the Delawares triumphed; nor did he actually quit the place, until admonished of the proximity of his friends, as well as enemies, by the bullets of the former, which began to patter among the dried leaves on the ground, like the bits of falling hail which precede the bursting of the tempest. Hawk-eye and his three companions withdrew a few paces to a sheltered spot, and awaited the issue with that sort of calmness that nothing but great practice could impart, in such a scene.

It was not long before the reports of the rifles began to lose the echoes of the woods, and to sound like weapons discharged in the open air. Then a warrior appeared, here and there, driven to the skirts of the forest, and rallying as he entered the clearing, as at the place where the final stand was to be made. These were soon joined by others, until a long line of swarthy figures was to be seen clinging to the cover, with the obstinacy of desperation. Heyward began to grow impatient, and turned his eyes anxiously in the direction of Chingachgook. The chief was seated on a rock, with nothing visible but his calm visage, considering the spectacle with an eye as deliberate, as if he were posted there merely to view the struggle.

"The time is come for the Delaware to strike!" said Duncan.

"Not so, not so," returned the scout; "when he scents his friends, he will let them know that he is here. See, see; the knaves are getting in that clump of pines, like bees settling after their flight. By the Lord, a squaw might put a bullet in such a knot of dark-skins!"

At that instant the whoop was given, and a dozen Hurons fell by a discharge from Chingachgook and his band. The shout that followed, was answered by a single war-cry from the forest, and a yell passed through the air, that sounded as though a thousand throats were united in a common effort. The Hurons staggered, deserting the centre of their line, and Uncas issued through the opening they left, from the forest, at the head of a hundred warriors.

Waving his hands right and left, the young chief pointed out the enemy to his followers, who instantly separated in the pursuit. The war now divided, both wings of the broken Hurons seeking protection in the woods again, hotly pressed by the victorious warriors of the Lenape. A minute might have passed, but the sounds were already receding in different directions, and gradually losing their distinctness beneath the echoing arches of the woods. One little knot of Hurons, however, had disdained to seek a cover, and were retiring, like lions at bay, slowly and sullenly up the acclivity, which Chingachgook and his band had just deserted to mingle, more closely, in the fray. Magua was conspicuous in this party, both by his fierce and savage mien, and by the air of haughty authority he yet maintained.

In his eagerness to expedite the pursuit, Uncas had left himself nearly alone; but the moment his eye caught the figure of *le Subtil*, every other consideration was forgotten. Raising his cry of battle, which recalled some six or seven warriors, and reckless of the disparity of their numbers, he rushed upon his enemy. *Le Renard*, who watched the movement, paused to receive him with secret joy. But at the moment when he thought the rashness of his impetuous young assailant had left him at his mercy, another shout was given, and *la Longue Carabine* was seen rushing to the rescue, attended by all his white associates. The Huron instantly turned, and commenced a rapid retreat up the ascent.

There was no time for greetings or congratulations; for Uncas, though unconscious of the presence of his friends, continued the pursuit with the velocity of the wind. In vain Hawk-eye called to him to respect the covers; the young Mohican braved the dangerous fire of his enemies, and soon compelled them to a flight as swift as his own headlong speed. It was fortunate that the race was of short continuance, and that the white men were much favoured both in the distance and the ground, by their position, or the Delaware would soon have outstripped all his companions, and fallen a victim to his own temerity. But ere such a calamity could happen, the pursuers and pursued entered the Wyandot village, within striking distance of each other.

Excited by the presence of their dwellings, and tired of the chase, the Hurons now made a stand, and fought around their council lodge with the desperation of despair. The onset and the issue were like the passage and destruction of a whirlwind. The tomahawk of Uncas, the blows of Hawk-eye, and, even, the still nervous arm of Munro, were all busy for that passing moment, and

11. *Lenape*—The Delaware (and Mohican) Indians are known as the Lenni Lenape. 25-26. *la Longue Carabine*—"the Long Rifle," the French nickname for Hawk-eye. 38. *Wyandot*—that is, Huron. 40-41. *desperation of despair*—So the first edition. Other editions read "fury of despair."

the ground was quickly strewn with their enemies. Still Magua, though daring and much exposed, escaped from every effort against his life, with that sort of fabled protection, that was made to overlook the fortunes of favoured heroes in the legends of ancient poetry. Raising a yell that spoke volumes of  
 5 anger and disappointment, the subtle chief, when he saw his comrades fallen, darted away from the place, attended by his two only surviving friends, leaving the Delawares engaged in stripping the dead of the bloody trophies of their victory.

But Uncas, who had vainly sought him in the *mél  *, bounded forward in  
 10 pursuit; Hawk-eye, Heyward, and David, still pressing on his footsteps. The utmost that the scout could effect, was to keep the muzzle of his rifle a little in advance of his friend, to whom, however, it answered every purpose of a charmed shield. Once Magua appeared disposed to make another and a final effort to revenge his losses; but abandoning his intentions so soon as demon-  
 15 strated, he leaped into a thicket of bushes, through which he was followed by his enemies, and suddenly entered the mouth of the cave already known to the reader. Hawk-eye, who had only forbore to fire in tenderness to Uncas, raised a shout of success, and proclaimed aloud, that now they were certain of their game. The pursuers dashed into the long and narrow entrance, in  
 20 time to catch a glimpse of the retreating forms of the Hurons. Their passage through the natural galleries and subterraneous apartments of the cavern was preceded by the shrieks and cries of hundreds of women and children. The place, seen by its dim and uncertain light, appeared like the shades of the infernal regions, across which unhappy ghosts and savage demons were flitting  
 25 in multitudes.

Still Uncas kept his eye on Magua, as if life to him possessed but a single object. Heyward and the scout still pressed on his rear, actuated, though, possibly, in a less degree, by a common feeling. But their way was becoming intricate, in those dark and gloomy passages, and the glimpses of the retiring  
 30 warriors less distinct and frequent; and for a moment the trace was believed to be lost, when a white robe was seen fluttering in the further extremity of a passage that seemed to lead up the mountain.

"'Tis Coral!" exclaimed Heyward, in a voice in which horror and delight were wildly mingled.

35 "Coral! Coral!" echoed Uncas, bounding forward like a deer.

"'Tis the maiden!" shouted the scout. "Courage, lady; we come—we come."

The chase was renewed with a diligence rendered tenfold encouraging by this glimpse of the captive. But the way was now rugged, broken, and, in spots, nearly impassable. Uncas abandoned his rifle, and leaped forward with  
 40 headlong precipitation. Heyward rashly imitated his example, though both were, a moment afterwards, admonished of its madness, by hearing the bellowing of a piece, that the Hurons found time to discharge down the passage in the rocks, the bullet from which even gave the young Mohican a slight wound.

45 "We must close!" said the scout, passing his friends by a desperate leap:

9. *m    *—misprint for *m    *, conflict.

"the knaves will pick us all off at this distance; and see; they hold the maiden so as to shield themselves!"

Though his words were unheeded, or rather unheard, his example was followed by his companions, who, by incredible exertions, got near enough to the fugitives to perceive that Cora was borne along between the two warriors, while Magua prescribed the direction and manner of their flight. At this moment the forms of all four were strongly drawn against an opening in the sky, and then they disappeared. Nearly frantic with disappointment, Uncas and Heyward increased efforts that already seemed superhuman, and they issued from the cavern on the side of the mountain, in time to note the route of the pursued. The course lay up the ascent, and still continued hazardous and laborious.

Encumbered by his rifle, and, perhaps, not sustained by so deep an interest in the captive as his companions, the scout suffered the latter to precede him a little; Uncas, in his turn, taking the lead of Heyward. In this manner, rocks, precipices, and difficulties, were surmounted in an incredibly short space, that at another time, and under other circumstances, would have been deemed almost insuperable. But the impetuous young men were rewarded, by finding that, encumbered with Cora, the Hurons were rapidly losing ground in the race.

"Stay; dog of the Wyandots!" exclaimed Uncas, shaking his bright tomahawk at Magua; "a Delaware girl calls stay!"

"I will go no farther," cried Cora, stopping unexpectedly on a ledge of rocks, that overhung a deep precipice, at no great distance from the summit of the mountain. "Kill me if thou wilt, detestable Huron, I will go no farther."

The supporters of the maiden raised their ready tomahawks with the impious joy that fiends are thought to take in mischief, but Magua suddenly stayed the uplifted arms. The Huron chief, after casting the weapons he had wrested from his companions over the rock, drew his knife, and turned to his captive, with a look in which conflicting passions fiercely contended.

"Woman," he said, "choose; the wigwam or the knife of le Subtil!"

Cora regarded him not; but dropping on her knees, with a rich glow suffusing itself over her features, she raised her eyes and stretched her arms towards Heaven, saying, in a meek and yet confiding voice—

"I am thine! do with me as thou seest best!"

"Woman," repeated Magua hoarsely, and endeavouring in vain to catch a glance from her serene and beaming eye, "choose."

But Cora neither heard nor heeded his demand. The form of the Huron trembled in every fibre, and he raised his arm on high, but dropped it again, with a bewildered air, like one who doubted. Once more he struggled with himself, and lifted the keen weapon again—but just then a piercing cry was heard above them, and Uncas appeared, leaping frantically, from a fearful height, upon the ledge. Magua recoiled a step, and one of his assistants, profiting by the chance, sheathed his own knife in the bosom of the maiden.

The Huron sprang like a tiger on his offending and already retreating countryman, but the falling form of Uncas separated the unnatural combatants. Diverted from his object by this interruption, and maddened by the murder

he had just witnessed, Magua buried his weapon in the back of the prostrate Delaware, uttering an unearthly shout, as he committed the dastardly deed. But Uncas arose from the blow, as the wounded panther turns upon his foe, and struck the murderer of Cora to his feet, by an effort in which the last of  
5 his failing strength was expended. Then, with a stern and steady look, he turned to le Subtil, and indicated, by the expression of his eye, all that he would do, had not the power deserted him. The latter seized the nerveless arm of the unresisting Delaware, and passed his knife into his bosom three several times, before his victim, still keeping his gaze riveted on his enemy with a  
10 look of inextinguishable scorn, fell dead at his feet.

"Mercy! mercy! Huron," cried Heyward, from above, in tones nearly choked by horror; "give mercy, and thou shalt receive it!"

Whirling the bloody knife up at the imploring youth, the victorious Magua uttered a cry so fierce, so wild, and yet so joyous, that it conveyed the sounds  
15 of savage triumph to the ears of those who fought in the valley, a thousand feet below. He was answered by an appalling burst from the lips of the scout, whose tall person was just then seen moving swiftly towards him, along those dangerous crags, with steps as bold and reckless, as if he possessed the power to move in middle air. But when the hunter reached the scene of the ruthless  
20 massacre, the ledge was tenanted only by the dead.

His keen eye took a single look at the victims, and then shot its fierce glances over the difficulties of the ascent in his front. A form stood at the brow of the mountain, on the very edge of the giddy height, with uplifted arms, in an awful attitude of menace. Without stopping to consider his person, the rifle  
25 of Hawk-eye was raised, but a rock, which fell on the head of one of the fugitives below, exposed the indignant and glowing countenance of the honest Gamut. Then Magua issued from a crevice, and stepping with calm indifference over the body of the last of his associates, he leaped a wide fissure, and ascended the rocks at a point where the arm of David could not reach him.  
30 A single bound would carry him to the brow of the precipice, and assure his safety. Before taking the leap, however, the Huron paused, and shaking his hand at the scout, he shouted—

"The pale-faces are dogs! the Delawares women! Magua leaves them on the rocks, for the crows!"

35 Laughing hoarsely, he made a desperate leap, and fell short of his mark; though his hands grasped a shrub on the verge of the height. The form of Hawk-eye had crouched like a beast about to take its spring, and his frame trembled so violently with eagerness, that the muzzle of the half raised rifle played like a leaf fluttering in the wind. Without exhausting himself with  
40 fruitless efforts, the cunning Magua suffered his body to drop to the length of his arms, and found a fragment for his feet to rest on. Then summoning all his powers, he renewed the attempt, and so far succeeded, as to draw his knees on the edge of the mountain. It was now, when the body of his enemy was most collected together, that the agitated weapon of the scout was  
45 drawn to his shoulder. The surrounding rocks, themselves, were not steadier than the piece became for the single instant that it poured out its contents. The arms of the Huron relaxed, and his body fell back a little, while his knees

still kept their position. Turning a relentless look on his enemy, he shook his hand at him, in grim defiance. But his hold loosened, and his dark person was seen cutting the air with its head downwards, for a fleeting instant, until it glided past the fringe of shrubbery which clung to the mountain, in its rapid flight to destruction.

5

### THE PATHFINDER

The events of *The Pathfinder* take place on the shores and waters of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River in the year 1760. Bumppo, now known as Pathfinder, is attached to Fort Oswego. The British have established a small post among the Thousand Islands, to cut off Indian trade with the French. A small detachment is sent to relieve the post in the cutter *Scud*, commanded by Jasper Western, known as Eau-douce. In the party are Sarjeant Dunham, his daughter Mabel, her uncle, Cap, a salt-water sailor, Pathfinder, and, eventually, Chingachgook. Pathfinder and Eau-douce have already conveyed Mabel and Cap through various perils, and suspect Arrowhead, a Tuscarora Indian, of treachery. Arrowhead has a wife, Dew-of-June. During the absence of part of the garrison, the British outpost is surprised and massacred, but Mabel is saved through the warnings of Dew-of-June. In the resulting battles for the recapture of the place, Mabel's father is killed, but not before he has required his daughter to marry Pathfinder, though she is really in love with Jasper. Pathfinder, however, discovers that Jasper is in love with Mabel.

The text is from the first American edition (1840).

### CHAPTER XIV

The occurrences of the last few days had been too exciting, and had made too many demands on the fortitude of our heroine, to leave her in the helplessness of grief. She mourned for her father, and she occasionally shuddered, as she recalled the sudden death of Jennie, and all the horrible scenes she had witnessed; but, on the whole, she had aroused herself, and was no longer in the deep depression that usually accompanies grief. Perhaps the overwhelming, almost stupefying sorrow that crushed poor June, and left her for nearly twenty-four hours in a state of stupor, assisted Mabel in conquering her own feelings, for she had felt called on to administer consolation to the young Indian woman. This she had done, in the quiet, soothing, insinuating way, in which her sex usually exerts its influence, on such occasions.

The morning of the third day was set for that on which the *Scud* was to sail. Jasper had made all his preparations; the different effects were embarked, and Mabel had taken leave of June—a painful and affectionate parting. In a word, all was ready, and every soul had left the island but the Indian woman, Pathfinder, Jasper, and our heroine. The former had gone into a thicket to weep, and the three last were approaching the spot where three canoes lay; one of which was the property of June, and the other two were in waiting to

9. **Jennie**—a soldier's wife tomahawked by Arrowhead. 9. **horrible scenes**—Shut up alone in the blockhouse, Mabel has had to witness the massacre of the little garrison. 12. **June**—whose husband, Arrowhead, has been killed by Chingachgook, though, as a matter of fact, the traitor was a Scotchman named Muir.

carry the others off to the Scud. Pathfinder led the way, but, when he drew near the shore, instead of taking the direction to the boats, he motioned to his companions to follow, and proceeded to a fallen tree, that lay on the margin of the glade, and out of view of those in the cutter. Seating himself on the trunk, he signed to Mabel to take her place on one side of him, and to Jasper to occupy the other.

“Sit down here, Mabel; sit down there, Eau-douce,” he commenced, as soon as he had taken his own seat; “I’ve something that lies heavy on my mind, and now is the time to take it off, if it’s ever to be done. Sit down, Mabel, and let me lighten my heart, if not my conscience, while I’ve the strength to do it.”

The pause that succeeded, lasted two or three minutes, and both the young people wondered what was to come next,—the idea that Pathfinder could have any weight on his conscience, seeming equally improbable to each.

“Mabel,” our hero at length resumed, “we must talk plainly to each other, afore we join your uncle in the cutter, where the Salt-water has slept every night since the last rally; for he says it’s the only place in which a man can be sure of keeping the hair on his head, he does— Ah’s me! what have I to do with these follies and sayings, now? I try to be pleasant, and to feel light-hearted, but the power of man can’t make water run up stream. Mabel, you know that the sarjeant, afore he left us, had settled it atween us two, that we were to become man and wife, and that we were to live together, and to love one another as long as the Lord was pleased to keep us both on ’arth; yes, and afterwards, too?”

Mabel’s cheeks had regained a little of their ancient bloom, in the fresh air of the morning; but at this unlooked-for address they blanched again, nearly to the pallid hue which grief had imprinted there. Still she looked kindly, though seriously, at Pathfinder, and even endeavoured to force a smile.

“Very true, my excellent friend,”—she answered—“this was my poor father’s wish, and I feel certain that a whole life devoted to your welfare and comforts, could scarcely repay you for all you have done for us.”

“I fear me, Mabel, that man and wife needs be bound together by a stronger tie than such feelings, I do. You have done nothing for me, or nothing of any account, and yet my very heart yearns towards you, it does; and therefore it seems likely that these feelings come from something besides saving scalps and guiding through woods.”

Mabel’s cheek had begun to glow again; and, though she struggled hard to smile, her voice trembled a little, as she answered.

“Had we not better postpone this conversation, Pathfinder?” she said; “we are not alone; and nothing is so unpleasant to a listener, they say, as family matters in which he feels no interest.”

“It’s because we are not alone, Mabel, or rather because Jasper is with us, that I wish to talk of this matter. The sarjeant believed I might make a suitable companion for you; and, though I had misgivings about it—yes, I had many misgivings—he finally persuaded me into the idee, and things came round atween us, as you know. But, when you promised your father to marry me, Mabel, and gave me your hand, so modestly, but so prettily, there was one circumstance, as your uncle called it, that you didn’t know; and I’ve thought it

right to tell you what it is, before matters are finally settled. I've often taken a poor deer for my dinner, when good venison was not to be found; but it's as nat'ral not to take up with the worst, when the best may be had."

"You speak in a way, Pathfinder, that is difficult to be understood. If this conversation is really necessary, I trust you will be more plain."

5

"Well, then, Mabel, I've been thinking it was quite likely when you gave in to the sarjeant's wishes, that you did not know the natur' of Jasper Western's feelings towards you?"

"Pathfinder!"—and Mabel's cheek now paled to the livid hue of death; then it flushed to the tint of crimson; and her whole frame shuddered. Pathfinder, however, was too intent on his own object, to notice this agitation; and Eau-douce had hidden his face in his hands, in time to shut out its view.

10

"I've been talking with the lad; and, on comparing his dreams with my dreams, his feelings with my feelings, and his wishes with my wishes, I fear we think too much alike, concerning you, for both of us to be very happy."

15

"Pathfinder—you forget—you should remember that we are betrothed!" said Mabel, hastily, and in a voice so low, that it required acute attention in the listeners to catch the syllables. Indeed, the last word was not quite intelligible to the guide, and he confessed his ignorance by the usual—

"Anan?"

20

"You forget that we are to be married; and such allusions are improper, as well as painful."

"Every thing is proper that is right, Mabel; and every thing is right that leads to justice and fair dealing: though it *is* painful enough, as you say; as I find on trial, I do. Now, Mabel, had you known that Eau-douce thinks of you in this way, maybe you never would have consented to be married to one as old and as uncomely as I am."

25

"Why this cruel trial, Pathfinder? To what can all this lead? Jasper Western thinks no such thing: he says nothing—he feels nothing."

"Mabel!" burst from out of the young man's lips, in a way to betray the uncontrollable nature of his emotions, though he uttered not another syllable.

30

Mabel buried her face in both her hands; and the two sat like a pair of guilty beings, suddenly detected in the commission of some crime that involved the happiness of a common patron. At this instant, perhaps, Jasper himself was inclined to deny his passion, through an extreme unwillingness to grieve his friend; while Mabel, on whom this positive announcement of a fact that she had rather unconsciously hoped than believed, came so unexpectedly, felt her mind momentarily bewildered; and she scarce knew whether to weep or to rejoice. Still she was the first to speak; since Eau-douce could utter naught that would be disingenuous, or that would pain his friend.

35

40

"Pathfinder," she said, "you talk wildly. Why mention this at all?"

"Well, Mabel, if I talk wildly, I *am* half wild, you know; by natur', I fear, as well as by habit." As he said this, he endeavoured to laugh in his usual noiseless way, but the effort produced a strange and discordant sound; and it appeared nearly to choke him. "Yes, I *must* be wild; I'll not attempt to deny it."

45

"Dearest Pathfinder!—my best, almost my only friend! you *cannot, do not* think I intended to say that!" interrupted Mabel, almost breathless in her haste



to relieve his mortification—"If courage, truth, nobleness of soul and conduct, unyielding principles and a hundred other excellent qualities can render any man respectable, esteemed, beloved, your claims are inferior to those of no other human being."

- 5 "What tender and bewitching voices they have, Jasper!" resumed the guide, now laughing freely and naturally—"Yes, natur' seems to have made them on purpose to sing in our ears, when the music of the woods is silent! But we must come to a right understanding, we must. I ask you again, Mabel, if you had known that Jasper Western loves you as well as I do, or better perhaps—  
10 though that is scarce possible,—that in his dreams he sees your face in the water of the lake; that he talks to you, and of you, in his sleep; fancies all that is beautiful like Mabel Dunham, and all that is good and virtuous; believes he never knowed happiness until he knowed you; could kiss the ground on which you have trod, and forgets all the joys of his calling, to think of you and of the  
15 delight of gazing at your beauty, and in listening to your voice, would you then have consented to marry me?"

- Mabel could not have answered this question, if she would, but, though her face was buried in her hands, the tint of the rushing blood was visible between the openings; and the suffusion seemed to impart itself to her very  
20 fingers. Still nature asserted her power, for there was a single instant when the astonished, almost terrified girl stole a glance at Jasper, as if distrusting Pathfinder's history of his feelings, read the truth of all he said in that furtive look, and instantly concealed her face again, as if she would hide it from observation for ever.

- 25 "Take time to think, Mabel," the guide continued, "for it is a solemn thing to accept one man for a husband, while the thoughts and wishes lead to another. Jasper and I have talked this matter over, freely and like old friends, and though I always knowed that we viewed most things pretty much alike, I couldn't have thought that we regarded any particular object with the very  
30 same eyes, as it might be, until we opened our minds to each other about you. Now, Jasper owns that the very first time he beheld you, he thought you the sweetest and winningest creatur' he had ever met; that your voice sounded like murmuring water in his ears; that he fancied his sails were your garments, fluttering in the wind; that your laugh haunted him in his sleep; and  
35 that, ag'in and ag'in, has he started up affrighted, because he has fancied some one wanted to force you out of the Scud, where he imagined you had taken up your abode. Nay, the lad has even acknowledged that he often weeps, at the thought that you are likely to spend your days with another, and not with him."

- 40 "Jasper!"

- "It's solemn truth, Mabel, and it's right you should know it. Now stand up, and choose atween us. I do believe Eau-douce loves you as well as I do myself; he has tried to persuade me that he loves you better, but that I will not allow, for I do not think it possible; but I will own the boy loves you, heart  
45 and soul, and he has a good right to be heard. The sarjeant left me your protector, and not your tyrant. I told him that I would be a father to you, as well as a husband, and it seems to me no feeling father would deny his child this

small privilege. Stand up, Mabel, therefore, and speak your thoughts as freely as if I were the sarjeant himself, seeking your good and nothing else."

Mabel dropped her hands, arose, and stood face to face with her two suitors, though the flush that was on her cheeks was feverish, the evidence of excitement, rather than of shame.

"What would you have, Pathfinder?" she asked: "Have I not already promised my poor father to do all you desire?"

"Then I desire this. Here I stand, a man of the forest, and of little larning, though I fear with an ambition beyond my desarts, and I'll do my endivours to do justice to both sides. In the first place, it is allowed that so far as feelings in your behalf are consarned, we love you just the same; Jasper thinks his feelings *must* be the strongest, but this I cannot say, in honesty, for it doesn't seem to me that it *can* be true; else I would frankly and freely confess it, I would. So in this particular, Mabel, we are here before you, on equal tarms. As for myself, being the oldest, I'll first say what little can be produced in my favour, as well as ag'in it. As a hunter, I do think there is no man near the lines that can outdo me. If venison, or bear's meat, or even birds and fish, should ever be scarce in our cabin, it would be more likely to be owing to natur' and Providence, than to any fault of mine. In short, it does seem to me, that the woman who depended on me, would never be likely to want for food. But, I'm fearful ignorant! It's true, I speak several tongues, such as they be, while I'm very far from being expart at my own. Then, my years are greater than your own, Mabel; and the circumstance that I was so long the sarjeant's comrade, can be no great merit in your eyes. I wish, too, I was more comely, I do; but we are all as natur' made us, and the last thing that a man ought to lament, except on very special occasions, is his looks. When all is remembered, age, looks, larning and habits, Mabel, conscience tells me I ought to confess that I'm altogether unfit for you, if not downright unworthy; and I would give up the hope, this minute, I would, if I didn't feel something pulling at my heart strings which seems hard to undo."

"Pathfinder!—noble, generous Pathfinder!"—cried our heroine, seizing his hand, and kissing it with a species of holy reverence; "you do yourself injustice—you forget my poor father and your promise—you do not know *me*!"

"Now, here's Jasper," continued the guide, without allowing the girl's caresses to win him from his purpose; "with *him*, the case is different. In the way of providing, as in that of loving, there's not much to choose atween us, for the lad is frugal, industrious and careful. Then he is quite a scholar—knows the tongue of the Frenchers—reads many books, and some, I know, that you like to read yourself—can understand you at all times, which, perhaps, is more than I can say for myself."

"What of all this?"—interrupted Mabel, impatiently—"why speak of it now—why speak of it, at all?"

"Then the lad has a manner of letting his thoughts be known, that I fear I can never equal. If there's any thing on 'arth that would make my tongue bold and persuading, Mabel, I do think it's yourself; and yet, in our late conversations, Jasper has outdone me, even on this point, in a way to make me ashamed of myself. He has told me how simple you were, and how true-

hearted, and kind-hearted; and how you looked down upon vanities, for though you might be the wife of more than one officer, as he thinks, that you cling to feeling, and would rather be true to yourself, and natur', than a colonel's lady. He fairly made my blood warm, he did, when he spoke of  
 5 your having beauty without seeming ever to have looked upon it, and the manner in which you moved about like a young fa'an, so nat'ral and graceful like, without knowing it; and the truth and justice of your ideas, and the warmth and generosity of your heart—"

"Jasper!" interrupted Mabel, giving way to feelings that had gathered an  
 10 ungovernable force by being so long pent, and falling into the young man's willing arms, weeping like a child, and almost as helpless. "Jasper!—Jasper!—why have you kept this from me?"

The answer of Eau-douce was not very intelligible, nor was the murmured dialogue that followed, remarkable for coherency. But the language of affection is easily understood. The hour that succeeded, passed like a very few minutes of ordinary life, so far as a computation of time was concerned; and when Mabel recollected herself, and bethought her of the existence of others, her  
 15 uncle was pacing the cutter's deck in great impatience, and wondering why Jasper should be losing so much of a favourable wind. Her first thought was  
 20 of him, who was so likely to feel the recent betrayal of her real emotions.

"Oh! Jasper!" she exclaimed, like one suddenly self-convicted—"the Pathfinder!"

Eau-douce fairly trembled, not with unmanly apprehension, but with the painful conviction of the pang he had given his friend; and he looked in all  
 25 directions, in the expectation of seeing his person. But Pathfinder had withdrawn, with a tact and a delicacy, that might have done credit to the sensibility and breeding of a courtier. For several minutes the two lovers sate, silently waiting his return, uncertain what propriety required of them, under circumstances so marked, and so peculiar. At length they beheld their friend advancing  
 30 slowly towards them, with a thoughtful and even pensive air.

"I now understand what you meant, Jasper, by speaking without a tongue, and hearing without an ear," he said, when close enough to the tree to be heard. "Yes, I understand it, now, I do, and a very pleasant sort of discourse  
 35 it is, when one can hold it with Mabel Dunham. Ah's me!—I told the sarjeant I wasn't fit for her; that I was too old, too ignorant, and too wild, like—but he *would* have it otherwise!"

Jasper and Mabel sate, resembling Milton's picture of our first parents, when the consciousness of sin first laid its leaden weight on their souls. Neither spoke, neither even moved; though both, at that moment, fancied they could  
 40 part with their new-found happiness, in order to restore their friend to his peace of mind. Jasper was pale as death; but, in Mabel, maiden modesty had caused the blood to mantle on her cheeks, until their bloom was heightened to a richness that was scarce equalled in her hours of light-hearted buoyancy and joy. As the feeling, which, in her sex, always accompanies the security of  
 45 love returned, threw its softness and tenderness over her countenance, she was

singularly beautiful. Pathfinder gazed at her, with an intentness he did not endeavour to conceal, and then he fairly laughed in his own way, and with a sort of wild exultation, as men that are untutored are wont to express their delight. This momentary indulgence, however, was expiated by the pang that followed the sudden consciousness that this glorious young creature was lost to him for ever. It required a full minute for this simple-minded being to recover from the shock of this conviction; and then he recovered his dignity of manner, speaking with gravity—almost with solemnity.

"I have always known, Mabel Dunham, that men have their gifts," he said; "but I'd forgotten that it did not belong to mine, to please the young, and beautiful, and l'arned. I hope the mistake has been no very heavy sin; and if it was, I've been heavily punished for it, I have. Nay, Mabel, I know what you'd say, but it's unnecessary; I *feel* it all, and that is as good as if I *heard* it all. I've had a bitter hour, Mabel—I've had a very bitter hour, lad—"

"Hour!" echoed Mabel, as the other first used the word, the tell-tale blood, which had begun to ebb towards her heart, rushing again tumultuously to her very temples. "Surely not an hour, Pathfinder!"

"Hour!" exclaimed Jasper, at the same instant—"no—no—my worthy friend, it is not ten minutes since you left us!"

"Well, it may be so; though to me it has seemed to be a day. I begin to think, however, that the happy count time by minutes, and the miserable count it by months. But we will talk no more of this; it is all over now, and many words about it, will make you no happier, while they will only tell me what I've lost; and quite likely how much I deserved to lose her. No—no—Mabel, 'tis useless to interrupt me; I admit it all, and your gainsaying it, though it be so well meant, cannot change my mind. Well, Jasper, she is yours; and though it's hard to think it, I do believe you'll make her happier than I could, for your gifts are better suited to do so, though I would have strived hard to do as much, if I know myself, I would. I ought to have known better than to believe the sarjeant; and I ought to have put faith in what Mabel told me at the head of the lake, for reason and judgment might have shown me its truth; but it is so pleasant to think what we wish, and mankind so easily over-persuade us, when we over-persuade ourselves. But what's the use in talking of it, as I said afore? It's true, Mabel seemed to be consenting, though it all came from a wish to please her father, and from being skeary about the savages—"

"Pathfinder!"

"I understand you, Mabel, and have no hard feelings, I hav'n't. I sometimes think I should like to live in your neighbourhood, that I might look at your happiness; but on the whole, it's better I should quit the 55th altogether, and go back to the 60th, which is my natyve rijement, as it might be. It would have been better, perhaps, had I never left it, though my sarvices were much wanted in this quarter, and I'd been with some of the 55th, years ago—Sarjeant Dunham, for instance, when he was in another corps. Still, Jasper, I do not regret that I've known you—"

"And me, Pathfinder?" impetuously interrupted Mabel—"do you regret having known *me*?—could I think so, I should never be at peace with myself!"

"You, Mabel!" returned the guide, taking the hand of our heroine, and looking into her countenance with guileless simplicity, but earnest affection—"how could I be sorry that a ray of the sun came across the gloom of a cheerless day? that light has broken in upon darkness, though it remained so short a time! I do not flatter myself with being able to march quite as light-hearted, as I once used to could, or to sleep as sound, for some time to come; but I shall always remember how near I was to being undeservedly happy, I shall. So far from blaming you, Mabel, I only blame myself for being so vain as to think it possible I could please such a creatur'; for, sartainly, you told me how it was, when we talked it over, on the mountain, and I ought to have believed you, then; for I do suppose it's nat'ral that young women should know their own minds better than their fathers. Ah's me! It's settled now, and nothing remains but for me to take leave of you, that you may depart; I feel that Master Cap must be impatient, and there is danger of his coming on shore to look for us all."

"To take leave!" exclaimed Mabel.

"Leave?" echoed Jasper: "you do not mean to quit us, my friend?"

"'Tis best, Mabel—'tis altogether best, Eau-douce; and it's wisest. I could live and die in your company, if I only followed feeling; but, if I follow reason, I shall quit you here. You will go back to Oswego, and become man and wife as soon as you arrive; for all that is determined with Master Cap, who hankers after the sea again, and who knows what is to happen: while I shall return to the wilderness and my Maker. Come, Mabel," continued Pathfinder, rising, and drawing nearer to our heroine, with grave decorum, "kiss me. Jasper will not grudge me one kiss: then we'll part."

"Oh! Pathfinder," exclaimed Mabel, falling into the arms of the guide, and kissing his cheeks again and again, with a freedom and warmth she had been far from manifesting while held to the bosom of Jasper—"God bless you, dearest Pathfinder! You will come to us hereafter. We shall see you again. When old, you will come to our dwelling, and let me be a daughter to you?"

"Yes—that's it"—returned the guide, almost gasping for breath: "I'll try to think of it in that way. You're more befitting to be my daughter, than to be my wife; you are. Farewell, Jasper. Now we'll go to the canoe; it's time you were on board."

The manner in which Pathfinder led the way to the shore, was solemn and calm. As soon as he reached the canoe, he again took Mabel by the hands, held her at the length of his own arms, and gazed wistfully into her face, until the unbidden tears rolled out of the fountains of feeling, and trickled down his rugged cheeks in streams.

"Bless me, Pathfinder;" said Mabel, kneeling reverently at his feet. "Oh! at least bless me, before we part."

That untutored, but noble-minded being, did as she desired; and, aiding her to enter the canoe, seemed to tear himself away as one snaps a strong and obstinate cord. Before he retired, however, he took Jasper by the arm, and led him a little aside, when he spoke as follows:—

"You're kind of heart, and gentle by natur', Jasper; but we are both rough and wild, in comparison with that dear creatur'. Be careful of her, and never

show the roughness of man's natur' to her soft disposition. You'll get to understand her, in time; and the Lord who governs the lake and the forest alike—who looks upon virtue with a smile, and upon vice with a frown—keep you happy, and worthy to be so!"

Pathfinder made a sign for his friend to depart; and he stood leaning on his rifle, until the canoe had reached the side of the Scud. Mabel wept as if her heart would break; nor did her eyes once turn from the open spot in the glade, where the form of the Pathfinder was to be seen, until the cutter had passed a point that completely shut out the island. When last in view, the sinewy frame of this extraordinary man was as motionless as if it were a statue set up in that solitary place, to commemorate the scenes of which it had so lately been the witness. 5 10

### THE PIONEERS

In *The Pioneers* Bumppo is not the central figure. The events take place in 1793, and Bumppo, known as Leather-stocking, is now content with hunting on the shores of the same lake which he knew as a youth in *The Deerslayer*. Aided by Chingachgook, who has sunk far from his first estate, he kills a deer out of season. He is observed by a local worthy named Doolittle, who makes complaint; and a warrant is issued for Bumppo's arrest. Bumppo, however, refuses to admit anyone to his cabin, and in the interval saves Elizabeth Temple, the daughter of the judge and proprietor of most of the land, from death at the hands of a panther. Richard Jones, the Judge's general factotum, who is also the sheriff, arrests Bumppo in the scene here given. The town which has grown up on the lake is named Templeton.

The text is from the first American edition (1823), in two volumes, the chapter containing this passage being Chapter XIII of Volume II. But in the one-volume editions the chapter has its present numbering.

### CHAPTER XXXII

. . . It has been already said that the "court of common pleas and general gaol delivery," or, as it is called in vulgar parlance, the "county court," over which Judge Temple presided, held one of its stated sessions on the following morning. The attendants of Richard were officers who had come to the village as much to discharge their usual duties at this court, as to escort the prisoners; and the Sheriff knew their habits too well, not to feel confident he should find most, if not all of them, in the public room of the gaol, discussing the qualities of the keeper's liquors. Accordingly he held his way, through the silent streets of the village, directly to the small and insecure building, that contained all the unfortunate debtors, and some of the criminals of the county, and where justice was administered to such unwary applicants as were so silly as to throw away two dollars, in order to obtain one from their neighbours. The arrival of four malefactors in the custody of a dozen officers, was an event, at that day, in Templeton; and when the Sheriff reached the gaol, he found every indication that his subordinates intended to make a night of it. 15 20 25

The nod of the Sheriff brought two of his deputies to the door, who in their turn drew off six or seven of the constables. With this force Richard led the

way through the village, towards the bank of the lake, undisturbed by any noise, except the barking of one or two curs, who were alarmed by the measured tread of the party, and by the low murmurs that run through their own numbers, as a few cautious questions and answers were exchanged, relative  
5 to the object of their expedition. When they had crossed the little bridge of hewn logs that was thrown over the Susquehanna, they left the highway, and struck into that field which had been the scene of the victory over the pigeons. From this they followed their leader into the low bushes of pines and chest-nuts which had sprung up along the shores of the lake, where the plough had  
10 not succeeded the fall of the trees, and soon entered the forest itself. Here Richard paused, and collected his troop around him.

"I have required your assistance, my friends," he said, in a low voice, "in order to arrest Nathaniel Bumpo, commonly called the Leather-stocking. He has assaulted a magistrate, and resisted the execution of a search-warrant, by  
15 threatening the life of a constable with his rifle. In short, my friends, he has set an example of rebellion to the laws, and has become a kind of outlaw. He is suspected of other misdemeanours and offences against private rights; and I have this night taken on myself, by the virtue of my office of sheriff, to arrest the said Bumpo, and bring him to the county gaol, that he may be  
20 present and forthcoming to answer to these heavy charges before the court tomorrow morning. In executing this duty, friends and fellow-citizens, you are to use courage and discretion. Courage, that you may not be daunted by any lawless attempts that this man may make, with his rifle and his dogs, to oppose you; and discretion, which here means caution and prudence, that he  
25 may not escape from this sudden attack—and—for other good reasons that I need not mention. You will form yourselves in a complete circle around his hut, and at the word 'advance,' called aloud by me, you will rush forward, and, without giving the criminal time for deliberation, enter his dwelling by force, and make him your prisoner. Spread yourselves for this purpose, while I shall  
30 descend to the shore with a deputy, to take charge of that point; and all communications must be made directly to me, under the bank in front of the hut, where I shall station myself, and remain in order to receive them."

This speech, which Richard had been studying during his walk, had the effect that all similar performances produce, of bringing the dangers of the  
35 expedition immediately before the eyes of his force. The men divided, some plunging deeper into the forest, in order to gain their stations without giving an alarm, and others continuing to advance, at a gait that would allow the whole party to get in order; but all devising the best plans, within their own thoughts, to repulse the attack of a dog, or to escape a rifle-bullet. It was a  
40 moment of dread expectation and interest.

When the Sheriff thought time enough had elapsed for the different divisions of his force to arrive at their stations, he raised his voice in the silence of the forest, and shouted the watchword. The sounds played among the arched branches of the trees in hollow cadences; but when the last sinking tone was  
45 lost on the ear, in place of the expected howls of the dogs, no other noises were returned, but the crackling of torn branches and dried sticks, as they yielded before the advancing steps of the officers. Even this soon ceased, as if

by a common consent, when, the curiosity and impatience of the Sheriff getting the complete ascendancy over discretion, he rushed up the bank, and in a moment stood on the little piece of cleared ground in front of the spot where Natty had so long lived. To his amazement, in place of the hut, he saw only its smouldering ruins.

The party gradually drew together about the heap of ashes and ends of smoking logs, while a dim flame in the centre of the ruin, which still found fuel to feed its lingering life, threw its pale light, flickering with the passing currents of the air, around the circle, now showing a face with eyes fixed in astonishment, and then glancing to another countenance, leaving the former shaded in the obscurity of night. Not a voice was raised in inquiry, nor an exclamation made in astonishment. The transition from excitement to disappointment was too powerful in its effects for speech: and even Richard lost the use of an organ that was seldom known to fail him.

The whole group were yet in the fulness of their surprise, when a tall form stalked from the gloom into the circle, treading down the hot ashes and dying embers with callous feet, and, standing over the light, lifted his cap, and exposed the bare head and weather-beaten features of the Leather-stocking. For a moment he gazed at the dusky figures who surrounded him, more in sorrow than in anger, before he spoke.

"What would ye with an old and helpless man?" he said. "You've driven God's creators from the wilderness, where his providence had put them for his own pleasure, and you've brought in the troubles and diviltries of the law, where no man was ever known to disturb another. You have driven me, that have lived forty long years of my allotted time in this very spot, from my home and the shelter of my head, least you should put your wicked feet and wasteful ways in my cabin. You've driven me to burn these logs, under which I've eaten and drunk, the first of Heaven's gifts, and the other of the pure springs, for the half of a hundred years, and to mourn the ashes under my feet, as a man would weep and mourn for the children of his body. You've rankled the heart of an old man, that has never harmed you or yours, with bitter feelings towards his kind, at a time when his thoughts should be on a better world; and you've driven him to wish that the beasts of the forest, who never feast on the blood of their own families, was his kindred and race: and now, when he has come to see the last brand of his hut, before it is melted into ashes, you follow him up, at midnight, like hungry hounds on the track of a worn-out and dying deer! What more would ye have? for I am here—one to many. I come to mourn, not to fight; and, if it is God's pleasure, work your will on me."

When the old man ended, he stood, with the light glimmering around his thinly-covered head, looking earnestly at the group, which receded from the pile, with an involuntary movement, without the reach of the quivering rays, leaving a free passage for his retreat into the bushes, where pursuit, in the dark, would have been fruitless. Natty seemed not to regard this advantage, but stood facing each individual in the circle, in succession, as if to see who would be the first to arrest him. After a pause of a few moments, Richard began to rally his confused faculties, and advancing, apologized for his duty,



and made him his prisoner. The party now collected, and, preceded by the Sheriff, with Natty in their centre, they took their way towards the village.

During the walk, divers questions were put to the prisoner concerning his reasons for burning the hut, and whither Mohegan had retreated; but to all of  
 5 them he observed a profound silence, until, fatigued with their previous duties, and the lateness of the hour, the Sheriff and his followers reached the village, and dispersed to their several places of rest, after turning the key of a gaol on the aged and apparently friendless Leather-stocking.

Bumppo is tried, found guilty, and put in the stocks, whence he is rescued with the connivance of Elizabeth Temple by a mysterious "Oliver Edwards," who has also figured in hunting episodes. She promises to bring Bumppo some powder on the mountain top where he is concealed. A forest fire breaks out while she is making her journey, but she is rescued by Bumppo. Chingachgook dies; the mysterious "Oliver Edwards" proves to be an heir of the Effingham family; and Bumppo leaves for less populous regions after the marriage of Oliver and Elizabeth.

## THE PRAIRIE

In *The Prairie* we see Bumppo in his old age. The year is 1804, and Ishmael Bush is toiling across the prairie with his family, and a young girl named Ellen Wade. Concealed in their wagon is Inez, who has been more or less kidnapped by them from Duncan Uncas Middleton, the grandson of Alice Heyward of *The Last of the Mohicans*. They meet the aged Leather-stocking. Ellen attracts the attention of a bee-hunter, Paul Hover, whom she meets in secret. Leather-stocking, Ellen, and Middleton get the girls away from Bush, only to fall into a series of hair-breadth escapes from Sioux Indians, a herd of buffaloes, and a prairie fire. They are aided, however, by the Pawnee warrior Hard-Heart. The Sioux, under the leadership of the villainous Mahtoree, finally capture the entire group, but Hard-Heart breaks from the Sioux by a stratagem, rallies his tribe, and in fierce combat kills Mahtoree and defeats his followers. The subplot, concerning the death of Asa Bush, is only indirectly related to this story. The whites, except for Leather-stocking, depart, secure in the friendship of the Pawnees. Some years later Middleton and Paul return and once more visit Hard-Heart and the Pawnee village. The text is from Chapter xvii of Volume II of the first edition in two volumes. In the one-volume edition the chapter has its present numbering.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

... When they entered the town, its inhabitants were seen collected in an  
 10 open space, where they were arranged with the customary deference to age and rank. The whole formed a large circle, in the centre of which were, perhaps a dozen of the principal chiefs. Hard-Heart waved his hand as he approached and as the mass of bodies opened he rode through, followed by his companions. Here they dismounted, and as the beasts were led apart, the strangers  
 15 found themselves environed by a thousand grave, composed, but solicitous faces.

Middleton gazed about him in growing concern, for no cry, no song, no shout welcomed him among a people, from whom he had so lately parted with regret. His uneasiness, not to say apprehensions was shared by all his

followers. Determination and stern resolution began to assume the place of anxiety in every eye, as each man silently felt for his arms, and assured himself that his several weapons were in a state for instant and desperate service. But there was no answering symptom of hostility on the part of their hosts. Hard-Heart beckoned for Middleton and Paul to follow, leading the way towards the cluster of forms, that occupied the centre of the circle. Here the visitors found a solution of all the movements which had given them so much reason for apprehension. 5

The trapper was placed on a rude seat, which had been made with studied care, to support his frame in an upright and easy attitude. The first glance of the eye told his former friends, that the old man was at length called upon to pay the last tribute of nature. His eye was glazed and apparently as devoid of sight as of expression. His features were a little more sunken and strongly marked than formerly; but there, all change, so far as exterior was concerned, might be said to have ceased. His approaching end was not to be ascribed to any positive disease, but had been a gradual and mild decay of the physical powers. Life, it is true, still lingered in his system, but it was as though at times entirely ready to depart, and then it would appear to reanimate the sinking form, as if reluctant to give up the possession of a tenement, that had never been undermined by vice or corrupted by disease. It would have been no violent fancy to have imagined, that the spirit fluttered about the placid lips of the old woodsman, reluctant to depart from a shell, that had so long given it an honest and an honourable shelter. 10 15 20

His body was so placed as to let the light of the setting sun fall full upon the solemn features. His head was bare, the long, thin locks of gray fluttering lightly in the evening breeze. His rifle lay upon his knee, and the other accoutrements of the chase were placed at his side within reach of his hand. Between his feet lay the figure of a hound, with its head crouching to the earth as if it slumbered, and so perfectly easy and natural was its position, that a second glance was necessary to tell Middleton, he saw only the skin of Hector, stuffed, by Indian tenderness and ingenuity, in a manner to represent the living animal. His own dog was playing at a distance with the child of Tachichana and Mahtoree. The mother herself stood at hand, holding in her arms a second offspring, that might boast of a parentage no less honorable, than that which belonged to the son of Hard-Heart. Le Balafre was seated nigh the dying trapper, with every mark about his person, that the hour of his own departure was not far distant. The rest of those immediately in the centre were aged men, who had apparently drawn near, in order to observe the manner, in which a just and fearless warrior would depart on the greatest of his journeys. 25 30 35

The old man was reaping his rewards of a life so remarkable for temperance and activity, in a tranquil and placid death. His vigour had in a manner endured to the very last. Decay, when it did occur, was rapid, but free from pain. He had hunted with the tribe in the spring, and even throughout most of the summer, when his limbs suddenly refused to perform their customary offices. A sympathizing weakness took possession of all his faculties, and the Pawnees believed, that they were going to lose, in this unexpected manner, a sage and counsellor, whom they had begun both to love and respect. But as 40 45

we have already said, the immortal occupant seemed unwilling to desert its tenement. The lamp of life flickered without becoming extinguished. On the morning of the day, on which Middleton arrived, there was a general reviving of the powers of the whole man. His tongue was again heard in wholesome  
5 maxims, and his eye from time to time recognized the persons of his friends. It merely proved to be a brief and final intercourse with the world, on the part of one who had already been considered, as to mental communion, to have taken his leave of it forever.

When he had placed his guests in front of the dying man, Hart-Heart, after  
10 a pause, that proceeded as much from sorrow as decorum, leaned a little forward and demanded—

“Does my father hear the words of his son?”

“Speak,” returned the trapper, in tones that issued from his inmost chest, but which were rendered awfully distinct by the death-like stillness, that reigned  
15 in the place. “I am about to depart from the village of the Loups, and shortly shall be beyond the reach of your voice.”

“Let the wise chief have no cares for his journey,” continued Hard-Heart with an earnest solicitude, that led him to forget, for the moment, that others were waiting to address his adopted parent; “a hundred Loups shall clear his  
20 path from briars.”

“Pawnee, I die, as I have lived, a Christian man,” resumed the trapper with a force of voice, that had the same startling effect on his hearers, as is produced by the trumpet, when its blast rises suddenly and freely on the air after its ob-  
25 structed sounds have been heard struggling in the distance; “as I came into life, so will I leave it. Horses and arms are not needed to stand in the presence of the Great Spirit of my people. He knows my colour and according to my gifts will he judge my deeds.”

“My father will tell my young men how many Mingoes he has struck and what acts of valour and justice he has done, that they may know how to imitate  
30 him.”

“A boastful tongue is not heard in the heaven of a white man!” solemnly returned the old man. “What I have done He has seen. His eyes are always open. That which has been well done, he will remember; wherein I have been  
35 wrong will he not forget to chastise, though he will do the same in mercy. No, my son; a Pale-face may not sing his own praises, and hope to have them acceptable before his God!”

A little disappointed, the young partisan stepped modestly back, making way for the recent comers to approach. Middleton took one of the meagre hands of the trapper and struggling to command his voice, he succeeded in announcing  
40 his presence. The old man listened like one whose thoughts were dwelling on a very different subject, but when the other had succeeded in making him understand, that he was present, an expression of joyful recognition passed over his faded features—

“I hope you have not so soon forgotten those, whom you so materially  
45 served!” Middleton concluded. “It would pain me to think my hold on your memory was so light.”

“Little that I have ever seen is forgotten,” returned the trapper; “I am at the

close of many weary days, but there is not one among them all, that I could wish to overlook. I remember you with the whole of your company; ay, and your gran'ther, that went before you. I am glad, that you have come back upon these plains, for I had need of one, who speaks the English, since little faith can be put in the traders of these regions. Will you do a favour, lad, to an old and dying man?" 5

"Name it," said Middleton; "it shall be done."

"It is a far journey to send such trifles," resumed the old man, who spoke at short intervals as strength and breath permitted; "A far and weary journey is the same; but kindnesses and friendships are things not to be forgotten. There is a settlement among the Otsego hills—" 10

"I know the place," interrupted Middleton, observing that he spoke with increasing difficulty; "proceed to tell me what you would have done."

"Take then this rifle, and pouch, and horn, and send them to the person, whose name is graven on the plates of the stock. A trader cut the letters with his knife, for it is long, that I have intended to send him such a token of my love!" 15

"It shall be so. Is there more that you could wish?"

"Little else have I to bestow. My traps I give to my Indian son; for honestly and kindly has he kept his faith. Let him stand before me." 20

Middleton explained to the chief, what the trapper had said, and relinquished his own place to the other.

"Pawnee," continued the old man, always changing his language to suit the person he addressed, and not unfrequently according to the ideas he expressed, "it is a custom of my people for the father to leave his blessing with the son, before he shuts his eyes forever. This blessing I give to you; take it, for the prayers of a Christian man will never make the path of a just warrior, to the blessed prairies, either longer or more tangled. May the God of a white man look on your deeds with friendly eyes, and may you never commit an act that shall cause him to darken his face. I know not whether we shall ever meet again. There are many traditions concerning the place of Good Spirits. It is not for one like me, old and experienced though I am, to set up my opinions against a nation's. You believe in the blessed prairies, and I have faith in the sayings of my fathers. If both are true, our parting will be final; but if it should prove, that the same meaning is hid under different words, we shall yet stand together, Pawnee, before the face of your Wahcondah, who will then be no other than my God. There is much to be said in favour of both religions, for each seems suited to its own people, and no doubt it was so intended. I fear, I have not altogether followed of the gifts of my colour, inasmuch as I find it a little painful to give up for ever the use of the rifle, and the comforts of the chase. But then the fault has been my own, seeing that it could not have been His. Ay, Hector," he continued, leaning forward a little, and feeling for the ears of the hound, "our parting has come at last, dog, and it will be a long hunt. You have been an honest, and a bold, and a faithful bound. Pawnee, you cannot slay the pup on my grave, for where a Christian dog falls, there he lies forever; but you can be kind to him, after I am gone for the love you bear his master." 45

"The words of my father, are in my ears," returned the young partisan, making a grave and respectful gesture of assent.

"Do you hear, what the chief has promised, dog?" demanded the trapper, making an effort to attract the notice of the insensible effigy of his hound.  
5 Receiving no answering look, nor hearing any friendly whine, the old man felt for the mouth, and endeavoured to force his hand between the cold lips. The truth then flashed upon him, although he was far from perceiving the whole extent of the deception. Falling back in his seat, he hung his head, like one who felt a severe and unexpected shock. Profiting by this momentary  
10 forgetfulness two young Indians removed the skin with the same delicacy of feeling, that had induced them to attempt the pious fraud.

"The dog is dead!" muttered the trapper, after a pause of many minutes; "a hound has his time as well as a man; and well has he filled his days! Captain," he added, making an effort to wave his hand for Middleton, "I am  
15 glad you have come; for though kind, and well meaning according to the gifts of their colour, these Indians are not the men, to lay the head of a white man in his grave. I have been thinking, too, of this dog at my feet; it will not do to set forth the opinion, that a Christian can expect to meet his hound again; still there can be little harm in placing what is left of so faithful a  
20 servant nigh the bones of his master."

"None in the least; it shall be as you desire."

"I'm glad, you think with me in this matter. In order then to save labour, lay the pup at my feet; or for that matter, put him side by side. A hunter  
need never be ashamed to be found in company with his dog!"  
25 "I charge myself with your wish."

The old man made a long, and apparently a musing pause. At times he raised his eyes wistfully as if he would again address Middleton, but some innate feeling appeared always to suppress his words. The other, who observed his hesitation, enquired in a way most likely to encourage him to proceed,  
30 whether there was aught else, that he could wish to have done.

"I am without kith or kin in the wide world!" the trapper answered; "when I am gone, there will be an end of my race. We have never been chiefs, but honest, and useful in our way, I hope it cannot be denied, we have always  
proved ourselves. My father lies buried near the sea, and the bones of his son  
35 will whiten on the prairies—"

"Name the spot, and your remains shall be placed by the side of your father," interrupted Middleton.

"Not so, not so, Captain. Let me sleep, where I have lived, beyond the din of the settlements. Still I see no need, why the grave of an honest man  
40 should be hid, like a Red-skin in his ambushment. I paid a man in the settlements to make and put a graven stone at the head of my father's resting place. It was the value of twelve beaver-skins, and cunningly and curiously was it carved! Then it told to all comers that the body of such a Christian lay beneath; and it spoke of his manner of life, of his years, and of his honesty.  
45 When we had done with the Frenchers in the old war, I made a journey to the spot, in order to see that all was rightly performed, and glad I am to say the workman had not forgotten his faith."

"And such a stone you would have at your grave?"

"I! no, no, I have no son but Hard-Heart, and it is little, that an Indian knows of White fashions and usages. Besides I am his debtor, already, seeing it is so little I have done, since I have lived in his tribe. The rifle might bring the value of such a thing—but then I know, it will give the boy pleasure to hang the piece in his hall, for many is the deer and the bird that he has seen it destroy. No, no, the gun must be sent to him, whose name is graven on the lock!" 5

"But there is one, who would gladly prove his affection in the way you wish; he, who owes you not only his deliverance from so many dangers, but who inherits a heavy debt of gratitude from his ancestors. The stone shall be put at the head of your grave." 10

The old man extended his emaciated hand, and gave the other a squeeze of thanks.

"I thought, you might be willing to do it, but I was backward in asking the favour," he said, "seeing that you are not of my kin. Put no boastful words on the same, but just the name, the age and the time of the death, with something from the holy book; no more, no more. My name will then not be altogether lost on 'arth; I need no more." 15

Middleton intimated his assent, and then followed a pause, that was only broken by distant and broken sentences from the dying man. He appeared now to have closed his accounts with the world, and to await merely for the final summons to quit it. Middleton and Hard-Heart placed themselves on the opposite sides of his seat and watched with melancholy solicitude the variations of his countenance. For two hours there was no very sensible alteration. The expression of his faded and time-worn features was that of a calm and dignified repose. From time to time he spoke, uttering some brief sentence in the way of advice, or asking some simple questions concerning those in whose fortunes he still took a friendly interest. During the whole of that solemn and anxious period each individual of the tribe kept his place, in the most self-restrained patience. When the old man spoke, all bent their heads to listen; and when his words were uttered, they seemed to ponder on their wisdom and usefulness. 20 25 30

As the flame drew nigher to the socket, his voice was hushed, and there were moments, when his attendants doubted whether he still belonged to the living. Middleton, who watched each wavering expression of his weather-beaten visage, with the interest of a keen observer of human nature, softened by the tenderness of personal regard, fancied he could read the workings of the old man's soul in the strong lineaments of his countenance. Perhaps what the enlightened soldier took for the delusion of mistaken opinion did actually occur, for who has returned from that unknown world to explain by what forms and in what manner, he was introduced into its awful precincts! Without pretending to explain what must ever be a mystery to the quick, we shall simply relate facts as they occurred. 35 40

The trapper had remained nearly motionless for an hour. His eyes, alone, had occasionally opened and shut. When opened, his gaze seemed fastened on the clouds, which hung around the western horizon, reflecting the bright 45

colours, and giving form and loveliness to the glorious tints of an American sunset. The hour—the calm beauty of the season—the occasion, all conspired to fill the spectators with solemn awe. Suddenly, while musing on the remarkable position, in which he was placed, Middleton felt the hand, which he  
 5 held, grasp his own with incredible power, and the old man, supported on either side by his friends, rose upright to his feet. For a moment he looked about him, as if to invite all in presence to listen, (the lingering remnant of human frailty,) and then with a fine military elevation of the head, and with a voice that might be heard in every part of that numerous assembly, he pronounced the word—

“Here!”

A movement so entirely unexpected, and the air of grandeur and humility, which were so remarkably united in the mien of the trapper, together with the clear and uncommon force of his utterance, produced a short period of confusion in the faculties of all present. When Middleton and Hard-Heart, who  
 15 had each involuntarily extended a hand to support the form of the old man, turned to him again, they found, that the subject of their interest was removed forever beyond the necessity of their care. They mournfully placed the body in its seat, and Le Balafre arose to announce the termination of the scene to the  
 20 tribe. The voice of the old Indian seemed a sort of echo from that invisible world, to which the meek spirit of the trapper had just departed.

“A valiant, a just and a wise warrior has gone on the path, which will lead him to the blessed grounds of his people!” he said. “When the voice of the Wahcondah called him, he was ready to answer. Go, my children; remember  
 25 the just chief of the Pale-faces, and clear your own tracks from briars!”

The grave was made beneath the shade of some noble oaks. It has been carefully watched to the present hour by the Pawnees of the Loup, and is often shown to the traveller and the trader as a spot where a just White-man sleeps. In due time the stone was placed at its head, with the simple inscription, which  
 30 the trapper had himself requested. The only liberty taken by Middleton was to add,—“*May no wanton hand disturb his remains!*”

## THE PILOT

The story of *The Pilot* concerns the activities of two American vessels on the “German Ocean” during the American Revolution. The officers of these ships are either related to fair cousins on the English shore or else in love with them, facts which occasion a good deal of ship-to-shore business. The most romantic of these officers is the mysterious Pilot himself, who is, it appears, John Paul Jones. The principal figure among the common seamen is Long Tom Coffin, and the principal villain is an exiled South Carolinian named Dillon. During the course of the story the smaller vessel, the *Ariel*, is wrecked, and in the wreck Long Tom Coffin loses his life. The episode chosen for reprinting here is, however, nearly complete in itself, and relates a brush between the American and British naval forces.

The text is from the first American edition (1823).

## CHAPTER XVIII

THE JOYFUL shouts and hearty cheers of the Ariel's crew continued for some time after her commander had reached her deck. Barnstable answered the congratulations of his officers by cordial shakes of the hand, and after waiting for the ebullition of delight among the seamen to subside a little, he beckoned with an air of authority for silence.

"I thank you, my lads, for your good will," he said, when all were gathered around him in deep attention; "they have given us a tough chase, and if you had left us another mile to go, we had been lost. That fellow is a King's cutter; and though his disposition to run to leeward is a good deal mollified, yet he shows signs of fight. At any rate, he is stripping off some of his clothes, which looks as if he were game. Luckily for us, Captain Manual has taken all the marines ashore with him, (though what he has done with them or himself, is a mystery,) or we should have had our decks lumbered with live cattle; but, as it is, we have a good working breeze, tolerably smooth water, and a dead match! There is a sort of national obligation on us to whip that fellow, and, therefore, without more words about the matter, let us turn to and do it, that we may get our breakfasts."

To this specimen of marine eloquence, the crew cheered as usual; the young men burning for the combat, and the few old sailors who belonged to the schooner, shaking their heads with infinite satisfaction, and swearing by sundry strange oaths, that their captain "could talk, when there was need of such a thing, like the best Dictionary that ever was launched."

During this short harangue, and the subsequent comments, the Ariel had been kept, under a cloud of canvass, as near to the wind as she could lie, and as this was her best sailing, she had stretched swiftly out from the land, to a distance whence the cliffs, and the soldiers who were spread along their summits, became plainly visible. Barnstable turned his glass repeatedly, from the cutter to the shore, as different feelings predominated in his breast, before he again spoke.

"If Mr. Griffith is stowed away among those rocks," he at length said, "he shall see as pretty an argument discussed, in as few words, as he ever listened to, provided the gentlemen in yonder cutter have not changed their minds as to the road they intend to journey—what think you, Mr. Merry?"

"I wish with all my heart and soul, sir," returned the fearless boy, "that Mr. Griffith was safe aboard us; it seems the country is alarmed, and God knows what will happen if he is taken! as to the fellow to windward, he'll find it easier to deal with the Ariel's boat, than with her mother; but he carries a broad sail, I question if he means to show play."

"Never doubt him, boy," said Barnstable, "he is working off the shore, like a man of sense, and besides, he has his spectacles on, trying to make out what tribe of Yankee Indians we belong to. You'll see him come to the wind presently, and send a few pieces of iron down this way, by way of letting us know

10. stripping off . . . clothes—showing less sail. 24. canvass—so in the original; other editions read: canvas.



where to find him. Much as I like your first lieutenant, Mr. Merry, I would rather leave him on the land this day, than see him on my decks. I want no fighting captain to work this boat for me! but tell the drummer, sir, to beat to quarters."

- 5 The boy, who was staggering under the weight of his melodious instrument, had been expecting this command, and, without waiting for the midshipman to communicate the order, he commenced that short rub-a-dub air, that will at any time rouse a thousand men from the deepest sleep, and cause them to fly to their means of offence, with a common soul. The crew of the
- 10 Ariel had been collected in groups, studying the appearance of the enemy, cracking their jokes, and waiting only for this usual order to repair to the guns; and at the first tap of the drum, they spread with steadiness to the different parts of the little vessel, where their various duties called them. The cannon were surrounded by small parties of vigorous and athletic young men; the
- 15 few marines were drawn up in array with muskets; the officers appeared in their boarding caps, with pistols stuck in their belts and naked sabres in their hands. Barnstable paced his little quarter-deck with a firm tread, dangling a speaking trumpet by its lanyard, on his fore-finger, or occasionally applying the glass to his eye, which, when not in use, was placed under one arm, while
- 20 his sword was resting against the foot of the mainmast; a pair of heavy ship's pistols were thrust into his belt also; and piles of muskets, boarding-pikes, and naked sabres were placed on different parts of the deck. The laugh of the seamen was heard no longer; and those who spoke, uttered their thoughts only in low and indistinct whispers.
- 25 The English cutter held her way from the land until she got an offing of more than two miles, when she reduced her sails to a yet smaller number, and heaving into the wind, she fired a gun in a direction opposite to that which pointed to the Ariel.

- "Now I would wager a quintal of codfish, Master Coffin," said Barnstable,
- 30 "against the best cask of porter that was ever brewed in England, that fellow believes a Yankee schooner can fly in the wind's eye! If he wishes to speak to us, why don't he give his cutter a little sheet, and come down."

- The cockswain had made his arrangements for the combat, with much more method and philosophy than any other man in the vessel. When the drum beat
- 35 to quarters, he threw aside his jacket, vest, and shirt, with as little hesitation as if he stood under an American sun, and with all the discretion of a man who had engaged in an undertaking that required the free use of his utmost powers. As he was known to be a privileged individual in the Ariel, and one whose opinions, in all matters of seamanship, were regarded as oracles by the crew,
- 40 and were listened to by his commander with no little demonstration of respect, the question excited no surprise. He was standing at the breech of his long gun, with his brawny arms folded on a breast that had been turned to the colour of blood by long exposure, his grizzled locks fluttering in the breeze, and his tall form towering far above the heads of all near him.
- 45 "He hugs the wind, sir, as if it was his sweetheart," was his answer; "but

16. **boarding caps**—something like the modern trench helmet. 18. **lanyard**—a cord or strap. 29. **quintal**—hundredweight. 33. **cockswain**—that is, Tom Coffin.

he'll let go his hold, soon; and if he don't, we can find a way to make him fall to leeward."

"Keep a good full!" cried the commander, in a stern voice; "and let the vessel go through the water. That fellow walks well, long Tom; but we are too much for him on a bowline; though, if he continue to draw ahead in this manner, it will be night before we can get alongside him." 5

"Ay, ay, sir," returned the cockswain; "them cutters carries a press of canvass when they seem to have but little; their gaffs are all the same as young booms, and spread a broad head to their mainsails. But it's no hard matter to knock a few cloths out of their bolt-ropes, when she will both drop astarn and to leeward." 10

"I believe there is good sense in your scheme, this time," said Barnstable; "for I am anxious about the frigate's people—though I hate a noisy chase; speak to him, Tom, and let us see if he will answer."

"Ay, ay, sir," cried the cockswain, sinking his body in such a manner as to let his head fall to a level with the cannon that he controlled, when, after divers orders, and sundry movements, to govern the direction of the piece, he applied a match, with a rapid motion, to the priming. An immense body of white smoke rushed from the muzzle of the cannon, followed by a sheet of vivid fire, until, losing its power, it yielded to the wind, and, as it rose from the water, spread like a cloud, and, passing through the masts of the schooner, was driven far to leeward, and soon blended in the mists which were swiftly scudding before the fresh breezes of the ocean. 20

Although many curious eyes were watching this beautiful sight from the cliffs, there was too little of novelty in the exhibition to attract a single look, of the crew of the schooner, from the more important examination of the effect of the shot on their enemy. Barnstable sprung lightly on a gun, and watched the instant when the ball would strike, with keen interest, while long Tom threw himself aside from the line of the smoke with a similar intention; holding one of his long arms extended towards his namesake, with a finger on the vent, and supporting his frame by placing the hand of the other on the deck, as his eyes glanced through an opposite port-hole, in an attitude that most men might have despaired of imitating with success. 25 30

"There go the chips!" cried Barnstable. "Bravo! Master Coffin, you never planted iron in the ribs of an Englishman with more judgment; let him have another piece of it, and if he like the sport, we'll play a game of long bowls with him!" 35

"Ay, ay, sir," returned the cockswain, who, the instant he witnessed the effects of his shot, had returned to superintend the reloading of his gun; "if he holds on half an hour longer, I'll dub him down to our own size, when we can close, and make an even fight of it." 40

The drum of the Englishman was now, for the first time, heard, rattling across the waters, and echoing the call to quarters that had already proceeded from the Ariel.

5. on a bowline—close-hauled. 8. gaffs—A gaff is the spar upon which the head of a fore-and-aft sail is extended. The point is the superior spread of sail on the enemy vessel. 10. bolt-ropes—A boltrope is stitched to the edge of a sail. 40. dub—trim.

"Ah! you have sent him to his guns!" said Barnstable; "we shall now hear more of it; wake him up, Tom—wake him up."

"We shall start him on end, or put him to sleep altogether, shortly," said the deliberate cockswain, who never allowed himself to be at all hurried, even  
5 by his commander. "My shot are pretty much like a shoal of porpoises, and commonly sail in each others' wake. Stand by—heave her breech forward—so; get out of that, you damned young reprobate, and let my harpoon alone."

"What are you at, there, Master Coffin?" cried Barnstable; "are you tonguetied?"

10 "Here's one of the boys skylarking with my harpoon in the lee scuppers, and by-and-by, when I shall want it most, there'll be a no-man's-land to hunt for it in."

"Never mind the boy, Tom; send him aft here, to me and I'll polish his behaviour; give the Englishman some more iron."

15 "I want the little villain to pass up my cartridges," returned the angry old seaman; "but if you'll be so good, sir, as to hit him a crack or two, now and then, as he goes by you to the magazine, the monkey will learn his manners, and the schooner's work will be all the better done for it. A young herring-faced monkey! to meddle with a tool ye don't know the use of. If your parents  
20 had spent more of their money on your edication, and less on your outfit, you'd ha' been a gentleman to what ye are now."

"Hurrah! Tom, hurrah!" cried Barnstable, a little impatiently; "is your namesake never to open his throat again!"

"Ay, ay, sir; all ready," grumbled the cockswain; "depress a little; so—so; a  
25 damn'd young baboon-behav'd curmudgeon; overhaul that forward fall more; stand by with your match—but I'll pay him! fire!" This was the actual commencement of the fight; for as the shot of Tom Coffin traveled, as he had intimated, very much in the same direction, their enemy found the sport becoming too hot to be endured in silence; and the report of the second gun from  
30 the Ariel was instantly followed by that of the whole broadside of the Alacrity. The shot of the cutter flew in a very good direction, but her guns were too light to give them efficiency at that distance, and as one or two were heard to strike against the bends of the schooner, and fall back, innocuously, into the water, the cockswain, whose good humour became gradually restored, as the  
35 combat thickened, remarked, with his customary apathy—

"Them count for no more than love taps—does the Englishman think that we are firing salutes!"

"Stir him up, Tom! every blow you give him will help to open his eyes,"  
cried Barnstable, rubbing his hands with glee, as he witnessed the success of  
40 his efforts to close.

Thus far the cockswain and his crew had the fight, on the part of the Ariel, altogether to themselves, the men who were stationed at the smaller and shorter guns, standing in perfect idleness by their sides; but in ten or fifteen

6. *her breech*—that is, the breech of the cannon, which was muzzle-loading. 7. *harpoon*—Coffin was a whaling man before he shipped on this vessel. 10. *lee scuppers*—The scuppers are openings cut through the bulwarks of a ship that water may flow overboard. 24. *depress a little*—lower the muzzle of the cannon a little. 25. *fall*—part of the tackle holding the cannon to the deck. 33. *bends*—the thickest planks in the sides of the ship.

minutes the commander of the *Alacrity*, who had been staggered by the weight of the shot that had struck him, found that it was no longer in his power to retreat, if he wished it; when he decided on the only course that was left for a brave man to pursue, and steered, boldly, in such a direction as would soonest bring him in contact with his enemy, without exposing his vessel to be raked by his fire. Barnstable watched each movement of his foe with eagle eyes, and when the vessel had got within a lessened distance, he gave the order for a general fire to be opened. The action now grew warm and spirited on both sides. The power of the wind was counteracted by the constant explosion of the cannon; and, instead of driving rapidly to leeward, a white canopy of curling smoke hung above the *Ariel*, or rested on the water, lingering in her wake, so as to mark the path by which she was approaching to a closer and still deadlier struggle. The shouts of the young sailors, as they handled their instruments of death, became more animated and fierce, while the cockswain pursued his occupation with the silence and skill of one who laboured in a regular vocation. Barnstable was unusually composed and quiet, maintaining the grave deportment of a commander on whom rested the fortunes of the contest, at the same time that his dark eyes were dancing with the fire of suppressed animation.

"Give it them!" he occasionally cried, in a voice that might be heard amid the bellowing of the cannon; "never mind their cordage, my lads; drive home their bolts, and make your marks below their ridge ropes."

In the mean time, the Englishman played a manful game. He had suffered a heavy loss by the distant cannonade, which no metal he possessed could retort upon his enemy; but he struggled nobly to repair the error in judgment with which he had begun the contest. The two vessels gradually drew nigher to each other, until they both entered into the common cloud, created by their fire, which thickened and spread around them in such a manner as to conceal their dark hulls from the gaze of the curious and interested spectators on the cliffs. The heavy reports of the cannon were now mingled with the rattling of muskets and pistols, and streaks of fire might be seen, glancing like flashes of lightning through the white cloud, which enshrouded the combatants, and many minutes of painful uncertainty followed, before the deeply interested soldiers, who were gazing at the scene, discovered on whose banners victory had alighted.

We shall follow the combatants into their misty wreath, and display to the reader the events as they occurred.

The fire of the *Ariel* was much the most quick and deadly, both because she had suffered less, and her men were less exhausted; and the cutter stood desperately on to decide the combat, after grappling, hand to hand. Barnstable anticipated her intention, and well understood her commander's reason for adopting this course, but he was not a man to calculate coolly his advantages, when pride and daring invited him to a more severe trial. Accordingly, he met the enemy half-way, and, as the vessels rushed together, the stern of the schooner was secured to the bows of the cutter, by the joint efforts of both

21-22. **drive home their bolts**—sink their bolts deeper into the timbers; pierce the sides of the vessel. 22. **ridge ropes**—life lines running alongside the bowsprit.

parties. The voice of the English commander was now plainly to be heard, in the uproar, calling to his men to follow him.

"Away there, boarders! repel boarders on the starboard quarter!" shouted Barnstable through his trumpet.

- 5 This was the last order that the gallant young sailor gave with this instrument, for, as he spoke, he cast it from him, and, seizing his sabre, flew to the spot where the enemy was about to make his most desperate effort. The shouts, execrations, and tauntings of the combatants, now succeeded to the roar of the cannon, which could be used no longer with effect, though the fight was still  
10 maintained with spirited discharges of the small arms.

"Sweep him from his decks!" cried the English commander, as he appeared on his own bulwarks, surrounded by a dozen of his bravest men; "drive the rebellious dogs into the sea!"

- "Away there, marines!" retorted Barnstable, firing his pistol at the advancing enemy; "leave not a man of them to sup his grog again."

The tremendous and close volley that succeeded this order, nearly accomplished the command of Barnstable to the letter, and the commander of the Alacrity, perceiving that he stood alone, reluctantly fell back on the deck of his own vessel, in order to bring on his men once more.

- 20 "Board her! gray beards and boys, idlers and all!" shouted Barnstable, springing in advance of his crew—a powerful arm arrested the movement of the dauntless seaman, and before he had time to recover himself, he was drawn violently back to his own vessel, by the irresistible grasp of his cockswain.

- "The fellow's in his flurry," said Tom, "and it wouldn't be wise to go within  
25 reach of his flukes; but I'll just step ahead and give him a set with my harpoon."

- Without waiting for a reply, the cockswain reared his tall frame on the bulwarks, and was in the attitude of stepping on board of his enemy, when a sea separated the vessels, and he fell with a heavy dash of the waters into the ocean. As twenty muskets and pistols were discharged at the instant he ap-  
30 peared, the crew of the Ariel supposed his fall to be occasioned by his wounds, and were rendered doubly fierce by the sight, and the cry of their commander to—

"Revenge long Tom! board her; long Tom or death!"

- They threw themselves forward in irresistible numbers, and forced a passage,  
35 with much bloodshed, to the forecastle of the Alacrity. The Englishman was overpowered, but still remained undaunted—he rallied his crew, and bore up most gallantly to the fray. Thrusts of pikes, and blows of sabres were becoming close and deadly, while muskets and pistols were constantly discharged by those who were kept at a distance by the pressure of the throng of closer  
40 combatants.

Barnstable led his men in advance, and became a mark of peculiar vengeance to his enemies, as they slowly yielded before his vigorous assaults. Chance had placed the two commanders on opposite sides of the cutter's deck, and the victory seemed to incline towards either party, wherever these daring officers

**24. The fellow**—Tom is talking the language of a whaler. A whale is **in his flurry** after it has been struck by a harpoon and threshes angrily in the water. At such times its flukes, or tail, are dangerous.

directed the struggle in person. But the Englishman, perceiving that the ground he maintained in person was lost elsewhere, made an effort to restore the battle by changing his position, followed by one or two of his best men. A marine, who preceded him, leveled his musket within a few feet of the head of the American commander, and was about to fire, when Merry glided  
5 among the combatants, and passed his dirk into the body of the man, who fell at the blow; shaking his piece, with horrid imprecations, the wounded soldier prepared to deal his vengeance on his youthful assailant, when the fearless boy leaped within its muzzle, and buried his own keen weapon in his heart.  
10

"Hurrah!" shouted the unconscious Barnstable, from the edge of the quarter-deck, where, attended by a few men, he was driving all before him. "Revenge!—long Tom and victory!"

"We have them!" exclaimed the Englishman; "handle your pikes! we have them between two fires."  
15

The battle would probably have terminated very differently from what previous circumstances, had indicated, had not a wild looking figure appeared in the cutter's channels at that moment, issuing from the sea, and gaining the deck at the same instant. It was long Tom, with his iron visage rendered fierce by his previous discomfiture, and his grizzled locks drenched with the briny  
20 element from which he had risen, looking like Neptune with his trident. Without speaking, he poised his harpoon, and, with a powerful effort, pinned the unfortunate Englishman to the mast of his own vessel.

"Starn all!" cried Tom, by a sort of instinct, when the blow was struck; and catching up the musket of the fallen marine, he dealt out terrible and fatal  
25 blows with its butt, on all who approached him, utterly disregarding the use of the bayonet on its muzzle. The unfortunate commander of the *Alacrity* brandished his sword with frantic gestures, while his eyes rolled in horrid wildness, when he writhed for an instant in his passing agonies, and then, as his head dropped lifeless upon his gored breast, he hung against the spar, a  
30 spectacle of dismay to his crew. A few of the Englishmen stood, chained to the spot in silent horror at the sight, but most of them fled to their lower deck, or hastened to conceal themselves in the secret parts of the vessel, leaving to the Americans the undisputed possession of the *Alacrity*. . . .

## [ENGLAND AND AMERICA]

### LETTER XXVII

TO RICHARD COOPER, ESQUIRE, COOPERSTOWN, NEW YORK

This chapter on the comparative qualities of the English and the Americans is from the first English edition of *England. With Sketches of Society in the Metropolis*, London, 1837, 3 vols., and is found in the third volume. The American edition of the work was entitled: *Gleanings in Europe. England. By an American*, and was

9. within its muzzle—meaning, apparently, within reach of the scope of its muzzle, which had a bayonet affixed to the end of it.

published in two volumes in Philadelphia the same year. It is by such comments as these that Cooper roused the ire of both countries, however sound his observations might be. The text is from the London edition.

IT WOULD be an occupation of interest to note the changes, moral and physical, that time, climate, and different institutions have produced between the people of England, and those of America.

- Physically, I do not think the change as great as is usually imagined. Dress  
 5 makes a sensible difference in appearance, and I find that the Americans, who have been under the hands of the English tailors, are not easily distinguished from the English themselves. The principal points of distinction strike me to be these. We are taller, and less fleshy; more disposed to stoop; have more prominent features, and faces less full; are less ruddy, and more tanned; have  
 10 much smaller hands and feet, anti-democratical as it may be; and are more slouching in gait. The exceptions, of course, are numerous; but I think these distinctions may be deemed national. The American, who has become Europeanized by dress, however, is so very different a looking animal from what he is at home, that too much stress is not to be laid on them. Then the great  
 15 extent of the United States is creating certain physical differences in our own population, that render all such comparisons liable to many qualifications.

- As to stature and physical force, I see no reason to think that the animal has deteriorated in America. As between England and the old Atlantic states, the difference is not striking, after one allows for the disparity in numbers, and the  
 20 density of the population here, the eye always seeking exceptions; but I incline to believe that the south-west will turn the scale to our side. I believe it to be a fact, that the aborigines of that portion of the Union were larger than those of our section of the country.

- There are obvious physical differences among the English themselves. One  
 25 county is said to have an undue proportion of red heads, another to have men taller than the common, this again men that are shorter, and all to show traces of their remote origins. It is probable that some of these peculiarities have descended to ourselves, though they have become blended by the unusual admixture of the population.

- Morally, we live under the influence of systems so completely the converse  
 30 of each other, that it is matter of surprise so many points of resemblance still remain. The immediate tendency of the English system is, to create an extreme deference in all the subordinate classes for their superiors; while that of the American is to run into the opposite feeling. The effects of both these  
 35 tendencies are certainly observable; though relatively, that of our own much less, I think, than that of England. It gives good models a rather better chance here, than they have with us.

- In England, the disaffected to the government are among precisely those  
 40 who most sustain government in America; and the disaffected in America, (if so strong a word can properly be used, as applied to natives,) are of a class whose interests it is to sustain government in England. These facts give

41. *England*—"When the writer went to Europe, it was so unusual to hear anything against the system of America, that disaffection may be said to have become extinct. On his return,

very different aspects to the general features of society. Walking in Regent-street lately, I witnessed an attempt of the police to compel some hackney coachmen to quit their boxes, and go with them before the magistrate. A crowd of a thousand people collected immediately, and its feeling was decidedly against the ministers of the law; so much so, indeed, as to render it doubtful whether the coachmen, whose conduct had been flagrantly criminal, would not be rescued. Now, in America, I think the feeling of such a crowd, would have been just the other way. It would have taken an interest in supporting the authorities of the country, instead of an interest in opposing them. This was not the case of a mob, you will remember, in which passion puts down reason; but an ordinary occurrence of the exercise of the power of the police. Instances of this nature might be multiplied, to show that the mass of the two people act under the influence of feelings diametrically opposed to each other.

On the other hand, Englishmen of the higher classes are, with very few exceptions, and these exceptions are usually instances of mere party opposition, attached to their system, sensitive of the subject of its merits or defects, and ever ready to defend it when assailed. The American of the same class is accustomed to sneer at democracy, to cavil at its fruits, and to colour and exaggerate its faults. Though this latter disposition may be, to a degree, accounted for by the facts, that all merit is comparative, and most of our people have not had the opportunities to compare; and that it is natural to resist most that which most annoys, although the substitution of any other for the actual system would produce even greater discontent; still, I think, the general tendency of aristocratical institutions on the one hand, and of democratical on the other, is to produce this broad difference in feeling, as between classes.

Both the Americans and the English are charged with being offensively boastful and arrogant as nations, and too much disposed to compare themselves advantageously with their neighbours. I have visited no country in which a similar disposition does not exist, and as communities are merely aggregations of men, I fancy that the disposition of a people to take this view of their own merits, is no more than carrying out the well known principle of individual vanity. The English and ourselves, however, well may, and probably do, differ from other nations in one circumstance connected with such a failing. The mass in both nations are better instructed, and are of more account than the mass in other countries, and their sentiments form more of a public opinion than elsewhere. When the bulk of a people are in a condition to make themselves heard, one is not to expect much refinement or delicacy, in the sentiments they utter. The English do not strike me as being a vainer nation than the French, although, in the way of ordinary intercourse, I believe that both they and we are more boastful.

however, after an absence of less than eight years, he was astonished to hear monarchical sentiments openly declared; and he believes that it will be generally admitted by all candid observers, that their avowal is now more open and frequent than they have been at any time within the present century. This is not the place to discuss the reasons; but this explanation is due from the writer, on his own account, as, without it, a change, that has actually taken place among others may be ascribed to himself. No one need be ashamed of having honestly altered his opinions, for good cause, and after mature examination; but, since the publication of these letters has commenced, the writer has been openly accused of changes that, in point of fact, have occurred among other people. Another occasion may offer to examine this point." (Cooper's note)



- The English are to be particularly distinguished from the Americans in the circumstance of their being a proud people. This is a useful and even an ennobling quality, when it is sustained by facts, though apt to render a people both uncomfortable and unpleasant, when the glory on which they pique themselves is passed away. We are almost entirely wanting in national pride, though abundantly supplied with an irritable vanity that might rise to pride, had we greater confidence in our facts. Most intelligent Englishmen are ready enough to admit the obvious faults of their climate, and even of their social condition; but it is an uncommon American that will concede anything material on such points, unless it can be made to bear on democracy. We have the sensitiveness of provincials, increased by the consciousness of having our spurs to earn, on all matters of glory and renown, and our jealousy extends even to the reputations of the cats and dogs. It is but an indifferent compliment to human nature to add, that the man who will join complacently, and I may say ignorantly, in the abuse of foreigners against the institutions of the country, and even against its people, always reserving a saving clause in favour of his own particular class, will take fire if an innuendo is hazarded against its beef, or a suggestion made that the four thousand feet of the Round Peak are not equal to the thirteen thousand feet of the Jung Frau. The English are tolerably free from this weakness, and travelling is daily increasing this species of liberality, at least. I presume that the insular situation of England, and our own distance from Europe, are equally the causes of these traits; though there may be said to be a "property qualification" in the very nature of man, that disposes him to view his own things with complacency, and those of his neighbours with disgust. Bishop Heber, in one of his letters to Lord Grenville, in speaking of the highest peaks of the Himalayas, throws into a parenthesis, "which I feel some exultation in saying, is completely within the limits of the British empire;" a sort of sentiment, of which, I dare say, neither St. Chrysostom nor Polycarp was entirely free.
- On the subject of sensibility to comments on their national habits and national characters, neither France nor England is by any means as philosophical or indifferent as one might suppose. As a rule, I believe all men are more easily enraged when their real faults are censured, than when their virtues are called in question; and if the defect happen to be unavoidable, or one for which they are not fairly responsible, the resentment is two-fold that which would attend a comment on a vice. The only difference I can discover between the English and ourselves in this particular, is easily to be traced to our greater provincialism, youth, and the consciousness that we are obliged to anticipate some of our renown. I should say that the English are *thin-skinned*, and the Americans *raw*. Both resent fair, frank, and manly comments with the same bad taste, resorting to calumny, blackguardism, and abuse, when wit and pleas-

19. *Jung Frau*—more commonly Jungfrau, the famous Swiss peak. 25. *Bishop Heber*—Reginald Heber (1783-1826), bishop of Calcutta. The passage quoted is from a letter from Bombay, June 1, 1825, which may be found in his *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India*, London, 1846, 2 vols., Vol. II, p. 240. The work originally appeared in 1827. 28. *St. Chrysostom*—St. John Chrysostom, or the "Golden-Mouthed" (345-407), ten years of whose life were devoted to ascetic study. 29. *Polycarp*—(about 69-155) bishop of Smyrna, mentioned here, apparently, because of his saintliness.

antry would prove both more effective and wiser, and, perhaps, reformation wisest of all. I can only account for this peculiarity, by supposing that the institutions and political facts of the two countries have rendered vulgar-minded men of more account than is usually the case; and that their influence has created a species of public opinion which is less under the correction of taste, principles, and manners, than is the case in nations where the mass is more depressed. Of the fact itself, there can be no question. 5

In order to appreciate the effect of refinement on this nation, it will be necessary to recur to some of its statistical facts. England, including Wales, contains rather less than fifty-eight thousand square miles of territory; the state of New York, about forty-three thousand. On the former surface, there is a population of something like fifteen millions; on the latter, a population of less than two. One gives a proportion of about two hundred and sixty to the square mile, and the other a proportion of less than fifty. These premises, alone would show us the immense advantage that any given portion of surface in England must possess over the same extent of surface in America, in all those arts and improvements that depend on physical force. If there were ten men of education, and refinement, and fortune, in a county of New York, of one thousand square miles in extent, there ought to be more than fifty men of the same character and means, in an English county of equal territory. This is supposing that the real premises offer nothing more against us than the disproportion between numbers and surface; whereas, in fact, time, wealth, and an older civilization more than quadruple the odds. Even these do not make up the sum of the adverse elements. Though England has but fifteen millions of souls, the empire she controls has nearly ten times that population, and a very undue proportion of the results of so great a physical force centre in this small spot. 10 15 20 25

The consideration of these truths suggest several useful heads of reflection. In the first place, they show us, if not the absolute impossibility, the great improbability, that the civilization, refinement, knowledge, wealth, and tastes of even the best portions of America can equal those of this country, and suggest the expediency of looking to other points for our sources of pride. I have said, that the two countries act under the influence of moral agencies that are almost the converse of each other. The condensation of improvement and cultivation is so great here, that even the base of society is affected by it, even to deportment; whereas, with us, these properties are so dispersed, as to render it difficult for those who are lucky enough to possess them, to keep what they have got, in face of the overshadowing influence of a lower school, instead of being able to impart them to society. Our standard, in nearly all things, as it is popular, is necessarily one of mediocrity; a highly respectable, and, circumstances considered, a singularly creditable one, but still a mediocrity; whereas, the condition of these people has enabled them to raise a standard which, however much it may be and is wanting in the better elements of a pure taste, has immensely the advantage of our own in most of the obvious blandishments of life. More than half of the peculiarities of America—peculiarities for which it is usual to seek a cause in the institutions, simply because they are so peculiar themselves—are to be traced to facts like these; or, in other words, to the dis- 30 35 40 45

proportion between surface and numbers, the want of any other commercial towns, and our distance from the rest of the world.

Every condition of society has its own advantages, and its own disadvantages. To claim perfection for any one in particular, would be to deny the nature  
5 of man. Their comparative merits are to be decided, only, by the comparative gross results, and it is in this sense, that I contend for the superiority of our own. The utilitarian school, as it has been popularly construed, is not to my taste, either; for I believe there is great utility in the grace and elegance of life, and no one would feel more disposed to resist a system in which these essen-  
10 tial properties are proscribed. That we are wanting in both, I am ready to allow; but I think the reason is to be found in facts entirely independent of the institutions, and that the time will come when the civilization of America will look down that of any other section of the world, if the country can pass that state of probation during which it is and will be exposed to the assaults  
15 of secret combinations to destroy it; and during which, moreover, it is, in an especial degree, liable to be affected by inherited opinions, and opinions that have been obtained under a system that has so many of the forms, while it has so few of the principles of our own, as easily to be confounded with it, by the ignorant and the unreflecting.

We over-estimate the effects of intelligence as between ourselves and the English. The mass of information, here, probably exceeds that of America, though it is less equally distributed. In *general* knowledge of a practical nature, too, I think no people can compete with our own. But there is a species of information, that is both useful and refining, in which there are few European  
25 nations that do not surpass us. I allude, in particular, to most things that serve to embellish life. In addition to this superiority, the Europeans of the better classes very obviously possess over us an important advantage, in their intimate associations with each other, by which means they insensibly imbibe a great deal of current knowledge, of which the similar classes in America are nearly  
30 ignorant; or, which, if known at all, is only known through the medium of books. In the exhibition of this knowledge, which embraces all that belongs to what is commonly termed a knowledge of the world, the difference between the European and the American is the difference that is seen between the man who has passed all his days in good society, and the man who has  
35 got his knowledge of it from novels and plays.

In a correct estimate of their government, and in an acquaintance with its general action, the English are much our superiors, though we know most of details. This arises from the circumstances that the rights of an Englishman are little more than franchises, which require no very profound examination  
40 to be understood; while those of the American depend on principles that demand study, and which are constantly exposed to the antagonist influence of opinions that have been formed under another system. It is true the English monarchy, as a monarchy and as it now exists, is a pure mystification; but the supremacy of parliament being admitted, there can arise no great difficulty on  
45 the score of interpretation. The American system, moreover, is complicated and double, and the only true Whig and Tory parties that can exist must have their origin in the circumstance. To these reasons may be added the general

fact, that the educated Englishman reasons on his institutions like an Englishman only; while his American counterpart oftener reasons on the institutions of the republic like an Englishman, too, than like an American. A single fact will show you what I mean, although a hundred might be quoted. In England the government is composed, in theory, of three bases and one summit; in 5 America, it is composed of one base and three summits. In one, there is supposed to be a balance in the powers of the state; and, as this is impossible in practice, it has resulted in a consolidated authority in its action; in the other, there is but one power, that of the entire people, and the balance is in the action of their agents. A very little reflection will show that the maxims of two such 10 systems ought to be as different as the systems themselves.

The English are to be distinguished from the Americans by greater independence of personal habits. Not only the institutions, but the physical condition of our own country has a tendency to reduce us all to the same level of usages. The steam-boats, the over-grown taverns, the speculative character of 15 the enterprises, and the consequent disposition to do all things in common, aid the tendency of the system in bringing about such a result. In England a man dines by himself, in a room filled with other hermits; he eats at his leisure, drinks his wine in silence, reads the paper by the hour; and, in all things, encourages his individuality and insists on his particular humours. The 20 American is compelled to submit to a common rule; he eats when others eat, sleeps when others sleep, and he is lucky, indeed, if he can read a paper in a tavern without having a stranger looking over each shoulder. The Englishman would stare at a proposal that should invade his habits under the pretence of a common wish, while the American would be very apt to yield tacitly, though 25 this common wish should be no more than an impudent assertion of some one who had contrived to effect his own purposes, under the popular plea. The Englishman is so much attached to his independence that he instinctively resists every effort to invade it, and nothing would be more likely to arouse him than to say the mass thinks differently from himself; whereas the American 30 ever seems ready to resign his own opinion to that which is made to seem to be the opinion of the public. I say *seems* to be, for so manifest is the power of public opinion, that one of the commonest expedients of all American managers, is to create an impression that the public thinks in a particular way, in order to bring the common mind in subjection. One often renders himself 35 ridiculous by a foolish obstinacy, and the other is as often contemptible by a weak compliance. A portion of what may be called the *community* of character and habits in America is doubtless owing to the rustic nature of its society, for one more easily maintains his independence in a capital than in a village, but I think the chief reasons are to be found in the practice of referring 40 every thing to the common mind.

It is usual to ascribe the solitary and unsocial habits of English life to the natural dispositions of the people, but, I think, unjustly. The climate is made

23. *shoulder*—"Exaggerated as this may appear, the writer has actually been driven away by strangers leaning over him, in this manner, no less than eleven times, at the Astor House, within the last twelvemonths." (Cooper's note.) The Astor House was the fashionable hotel of New York when this note was written.

to bear the blame of no small portion of this peculiarity. Climate, probably, has an influence on us all, for we know that we are more elastic and more ready to be pleased in a clear bracing air, than in one that is close and *siroccoish*, but, on the whole I am led to think, the English owe their habits to their institutions, more than to any natural causes.

I know no subject, no feeling, nothing, on which an Englishman, as a rule, so completely loses sight of all the better points of his character, on which he is so uniformly bigoted and unjust, so ready to listen to misrepresentation and caricature, and so unwilling to receive truth—on which, in short, he is so little himself in general, as on those connected with America.

As the result of this hasty and imperfect comparison, I am led to believe, that a national character somewhere between the two, would be preferable to either, as it is actually found. This may be saying no more than that man does not exist in a condition of perfection; but were the inequalities named, pared off from both people, an ingenious critic might still find faults of sufficient magnitude to preserve the identity with the human race, and qualities of sufficient elevation, to entitle both to be considered among the greatest and best nations of modern, if not of any other, times.

In most things that pertain to taste, the English have greatly the advantage of us, though *taste* is certainly not the strong side of English character. On this point, alone, one might write a book, but a very few remarks must now satisfy you. In nothing, however, is this superiority more apparent, than in their simplicity, and, particularly, in their simplicity of language. They call a spade, a spade. I very well know, that neither men nor women, in America, who are properly educated, and who are accustomed to its really better tone, differ much, if any, from the English in this particular; but, in this case, as in most others, in which *national* peculiarities are sought, the better tone of America is overshadowed by its mediocrity. Although I deem the government of this country

**28. mediocrity**—"Mrs. Butler, in her shrewd work on America, has given many good hits at this love for the grandiose. Whenever this lady has gone out of her particular sphere, or that of her sex, her remarks are such as might have been anticipated from a young English woman, visiting America with all her political prejudices about her, and, almost as a matter of course, necessarily ignorant of the true machinery and action of governments. Even in this writer, the expectation, not to say the *longing*, for a dissolution of the Union, that has been so often mentioned in these pages, is sufficiently apparent: she, also, has fallen into the very common error of ascribing things to the institutions, such for instance as the *nonchalance* of the tradespeople, and the noisy, screeching, hoydenish romps of the sexes, which it suits the caprices of certain people to term society, when they ought to be referred, one to the personal independence of a country prosperous beyond example, and the other to the unsettled condition of towns, that double their population every twenty years, and their wealth in ten.

"Mrs. Butler has made many other mistakes, beyond a question, for she has written under erroneous impressions at starting. Of this class are all the misconceptions connected with those usages that are thought to be tending daily towards aristocracy. Any one who knows the country well, knows that in all the ordinary appliances of this nature, America has been gradually receding from such forms for the last forty years. Thus footmen, liveries, hatchments, coats of arms, &c. &c. are all much less common now, than at the commencement of the century. Mrs. Butler has mistaken the twilight for the dawn; the shadows of the past for those of coming events. This is a common misapprehension of the English, and it arises from a disposition to see things in their own way.

"The treatment that this lady has received cannot be too loudly condemned. She has been derided, caricatured, almost, if not positively, slandered, because she has presumed to speak the truth about us! Mrs. Trollope has met with similar denunciations, though with a greater show of reason, for Mrs. Trollope has calumniated her own sex in America. Besides, one sees in the

the very quintessence of hocus pocus, having scarcely a single practice that does not violate its theory, I believe that there is more honesty of public sentiment in England, than in America. The defect at home, I ascribe, in common with the majority of our national failings, to the greater activity, and greater *un-*  
*resisted* force of ignorance and cupidity, there, than here. High qualities are  
 5 nowhere collected in a sufficient phalanx to present a front to the enemy, in America.

The besetting, the degrading vice of America, is the moral cowardice by which men are led to truckle to what is called public opinion; though this  
 10 opinion is as inconstant as the winds—though, in all cases that enlist the feelings of factions, there are *two* and sometimes twenty, each differing from all the others, and though, nine times in ten, these opinions are mere engines set in motion by the most corrupt and the least respectable portion of the community, for unworthy purposes. The English are a more respectable and constant nation than the Americans, as relates to this peculiarity; probably, because  
 15 the condensed masses of intelligence and character enable the superior portion of the community to produce a greater impression on the inferior, by their collective force. In standing prejudices, they strike me as being worse than ourselves; but in passing impressions, greatly our superiors.

For the last I have endeavoured to account, and I think the first may be  
 20 ascribed to a system that is sustained by errors that it is not the interest of the more enlightened to remove, but which, instead of weakening in the ignorant, they rather encourage in themselves.

book of Mrs. Trollope, a malignant feeling, and calculations of profit; while the work of Mrs. Butler is as honest as it is fearless. The latter has designated persons too plainly, perhaps, coupled with unpleasant remarks; but all these faults may be overlooked as the whims of a very young female.

"In one thing Mrs. Butler is singularly mistaken. She says that neither England, nor France, manifests any sensibility on the subject of the comments of travellers! The French do not, ordinarily, understand the comments of the English, or the English those of the French. Neither nation reads nor knows any thing about the comments of the Americans at all. Nothing is easier than to manifest indifference to things of which we are totally ignorant. As respects the English, however, one has only to name Pillet, d'Haussez, and Puckler-Muskau, in order to show how much abuse and calumny they can heap on those whose opinions displease them. The stories circulated in English society, concerning the latter, by way of retaliation for his book, were quite on a level with the Trollopeana of America. Both are a disgrace to civilization." (Cooper's note)

Cooper is here discussing the diary of her travels that Fanny Kemble Butler published in 1835.

# WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

1794-1878

## I. THE PRECOCIOUS BOY (1794-1825)

- 1794 November 3, born at Cummington, Massachusetts, son of Dr. Peter Bryant and Sarah Snell Bryant.
- 1799 Attended district school.
- 1803 First verses written. "The Description of the School" published in *The Hampshire Gazette*, Northampton, in 1804.
- 1808 *The Embargo, or Sketches of the Times, a Satire*, a Federalist attack on Jefferson published in Boston, a revised edition appearing in 1809. Bryant began preparation for college.
- 1810-1811 Studied as a sophomore in Williams College (to May 8). Withdrew to prepare for Yale, but commenced study of law instead, being admitted to the bar August 9, 1814.
- 1817 "Thanatopsis" (in first form) published in the *North American Review* for September, attracting wide notice. Bryant began writing more or less regularly for the magazines.
- 1818 Published "Early American Verse" in the *North American Review* for July, censuring the "poverty and meanness" of the American muse.
- 1819 Elected town clerk of Great Barrington, whither he had removed in 1817.
- 1820 Father died, March 20.
- 1821 Married Fanny Fairchild, June 11. Delivered *The Ages* as Phi Beta Kappa poem at Harvard, August 30. *Poems* published in Boston.
- 1823 Failed as a dramatist with *The Heroes*.
- 1824 Active as a reviewer and as a lawyer.
- 1825 Removed to New York, where he became one of a literary group which eventually included Robert C. Sands, Cooper, Irving, Halleck.

## II. POET, EDITOR, AND PUBLIC SPEAKER (1825-1855)

- 1826 Delivered four lectures on poetry before the American Athenaeum Society in April. Became assistant editor of the *Evening Post*.
- 1827 Appointed professor on the staff of the National Academy of the Arts of Design, lecturing on mythology (to 1831). Edited the *Talisman* with Sands and G. C. Verplanck (1829-1830; republished as *Miscellanies*, 1832).
- 1829-1878 Editor-in-chief of the *Evening Post*.
- 1832 *Poems* published in New York, the London edition being superintended by Irving. Visited Illinois. Contributed short stories to *Tales of the Glauher Spa*.
- 1833 Visited Canada.
- 1834-1836 Sailed for Europe June 24, 1834, visiting France, Italy, and Germany,

- returning March 26, 1836, when a testimonial dinner was offered him and declined.
- 1839 Instrumental in publishing Dana's *Two Years before the Mast* (1840).
- 1842 *The Fountain and Other Poems* published in New York and London.
- 1843 Visited the South, meeting William Gilmore Simms. Acquired his home, Roslyn, in New York.
- 1844 *The White Footed Deer and Other Poems* published in New York.
- 1845 Sailed for Europe April 22, returning in November; met leading literary figures in England.
- 1846 Illustrated edition of his poems published in Philadelphia.
- 1848 Delivered eulogy (May 4) on Thomas Cole, the painter, the first of a series of similar commemorative addresses.
- 1849 Visited Cuba, and once more sailed for Europe (June 13), returning in December. *Letters of a Traveller, or Notes of Things Seen in Europe and America* published in New York; often reprinted.
- 1852 Delivered commemorative address on Cooper, February 25 ("A Discourse on the Life and Genius of James Fenimore Cooper"), long the only biography. Sailed for the Mediterranean November 13, returning June, 1853.

### III. THE GRAND OLD MAN (1855-1878)

- 1855 Bryant active in organization of the Republican party in the East. *Poems*, 2 vols., published in New York.
- 1857 Sailed for Europe May 2, visiting Spain and Italy, where he met leading literary men and artists, returning August, 1858.
- 1860-1865 Active in support of the Union cause.
- 1864 *Thirty Poems* published in New York. *Hymns* privately printed; and again in 1869.
- 1866 Mrs. Bryant died July 27. At work on his translation of Homer. Sailed for Europe in October, visiting Spain and Italy, and returning in August, 1867.
- 1869 *Letters from the East* published. Active as a commemorative orator.
- 1870 Translation of the Iliad published (Odyssey, 1871-1872).
- 1871 Published *The Song of the Sower*. Edited *A Library of Poetry and Song* (1871-72). Attacked Darwinism in an address at Williams College.
- 1872 Visited the Caribbean and Mexico.
- 1873 Published *The Little People of the Snow*.
- 1878 Published *The Flood of Years*. Died June 12.
- 1879 Household edition of Bryant's *Poems* published.

**BIOGRAPHIES:** There is a life by Parke Godwin in *The Life and Works* (see below). See also John Bigelow, *William Cullen Bryant*, Houghton Mifflin, 1890 (American Men of Letters); W. A. Bradley, *William Cullen Bryant*, Macmillan, 1905 (English Men of Letters). These biographies should be corrected in the light of Allan Nevins, *The Evening Post: A Century of Journalism*, Boni & Liveright, 1922, which approaches Bryant from a fresh point of view. See also the life by Nevins in the Dictionary of American Biography.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY AND EDITIONS:** Aside from the *Literary History of the United States*, Vol. III, pp. 422-27, the best bibliography is that in the Roslyn edition of the *Poetical Works*.

*The Life and Works of William Cullen Bryant*, ed. by Parke Godwin,



## WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

Appleton, 1883-84, 6 vols. (highly selective for the prose). There is no complete edition of Bryant's prose, and much of his editorial writing has never been collected. The best edition of the poetry is the Roslyn edition: *Poetical Works of William Cullen Bryant*, ed. by H. C. Sturges, Appleton, 1903. The best book of selections is that by Tremaine McDowell in the American Writers Series (American Book Co., 1935).

One's impression of Bryant is so fixed by the familiar picture of the white-bearded old poet that it is difficult to remember he was once a young, audacious stripling of twenty-one. This impression is further strengthened by the quality of his familiar verse—its stately dignity, its obsession with death and immemorial antiquity, the hoary age of the American landscape, and so on. Such portions of his prose as are generally familiar usually commemorate the virtues of a deceased friend, so that this, too, increases the atmosphere of veneration. It is not surprising therefore that, to the popular mind, Bryant is perpetually eighty years old. To offset these prejudices, it is well to remember that in 1821 Channing invited him to a "literary frolic" in *The Idle Man*, and that Bryant manufactured literary hoaxes in the *Evening Post*.

Most of Bryant's prose is unavailable, and that which is available is too little read. There is, it is true, something elephantine in his clumsy attempts at fiction. His great personal dignity colors all he wrote. Yet he was a vigorous and successful editorial writer, one who could be caustic on occasion, and one who waged valiant literary warfare for his political beliefs, which were in truth sufficiently radical, if one remembers the Federalist predilections of his youth. His commemorative addresses became a literary institution in New York; and though he was prevented by the nature of these occasions from unkind comment on the dead, he often wove a good deal of shrewd criticism into the texture of these speeches. His reviews, and the general articles which he contributed to periodicals, often contain just and vigorous criticism of American literature.

It is, however, as a poet that Bryant is mainly remembered. He is conventionally called the American Wordsworth; but more important than superficial resemblances between his nature poems and those of the English bard is Bryant's relation to the eighteenth-century world from which he emerged. Kirke White, Cowper, Blair, Young, and Bishop Porteus (he of "Death" fame) form the background of "Thanatopsis." Bryant's view of the American landscape has its parallels in such travelers as Bartram and such theorists as Volney in the latter's *Ruins of Empire*. The poet began his career with "The Embargo," which any minor eighteenth-century satirist might have written, and closed it with "The Flood of Years," which any eighteenth-century moralist might have approved. This is not to say that his poems are not contemporary with the occasions which called them forth, but points rather to his intellectual and emotional origins. It is Bryant, rather than the Connecticut Wits, who first led American verse out of the wilderness of arid generalities into the promised land of specific American themes. This is his great historical service.

### THANATOPSIS

This most famous of Bryant's poems was first published (in abbreviated form) in the *North American Review*, September, 1817, and then, considerably revised, in the *Poems*

of 1821. The first form of the poem includes four indifferent quatrains, which were immediately dropped; the blank verse begins with "Yet a few days" of line 17 and extends to "make their bed with thee" of line 66 of the present version. The poem underwent a number of textual revisions of a minor sort,

which can be studied in the Roslyn edition, p. lxxxi. The present text, as is the case with the other selections from Bryant, is from the Household edition, copyrighted in 1876, the last to appear in Bryant's lifetime. Of "Thanatopsis" in its original form the story is told that Richard H. Dana exclaimed to Willard Phillips (they were both members of the *North American* staff at the time): "Oh, Phillips, you have been imposed upon. No one on this side of the Atlantic is capable of writing such verses." The title may be roughly paraphrased as meaning: "About Death."

To him who in the love of Nature holds  
Communion with her visible forms, she  
speaks  
A various language; for his gayer hours  
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile  
And eloquence of beauty, and she glides 5  
Into his darker musings, with a mild  
And healing sympathy, that steals away  
Their sharpness, ere he is aware. When  
thoughts  
Of the last bitter hour come like a blight  
Over thy spirit, and sad images 10  
Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,  
And breathless darkness, and the narrow  
house,  
Make thee to shudder, and grow sick at  
heart;—  
Go forth, under the open sky, and list  
To Nature's teachings, while from all  
around— 15  
Earth and her waters, and the depths of air—  
Comes a still voice— Yet a few days, and thee  
The all-beholding sun shall see no more  
In all his course; nor yet in the cold ground,  
Where thy pale form was laid, with many  
tears, 20  
Nor in the embrace of ocean, shall exist  
Thy image. Earth, that nourished thee, shall  
claim  
Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again,

And, lost each human trace, surrendering up  
Thine individual being, shalt thou go 25  
To mix forever with the elements,  
To be a brother to the insensible rock  
And to the sluggish clod, which the rude  
swain  
Turns with his share, and treads upon. The  
oak  
Shall send his roots abroad, and pierce thy  
mould. 30

Yet not to thine eternal resting-place  
Shalt thou retire alone, nor couldst thou wish  
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down  
With patriarchs of the infant world—with  
kings,  
The powerful of the earth—the wise, the  
good, 35  
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,  
All in one mighty sepulchre. The hills  
Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun,—the  
vales  
Stretching in pensive quietness between;  
The venerable woods—rivers that move 40  
In majesty, and the complaining brooks  
That make the meadows green; and, poured  
round all,  
Old Ocean's gray and melancholy waste,—  
Are but the solemn decorations all  
Of the great tomb of man. The golden sun, 45  
The planets, all the infinite host of heaven,  
Are shining on the sad abodes of death,  
Through the still lapse of ages. All that tread  
The globe are but a handful to the tribes  
That slumber in its bosom.—Take the  
wings 50  
Of morning, pierce the Barcan wilderness,  
Or lose thyself in the continuous woods  
Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound,  
Save his own dashings—yet the dead are  
there:  
And millions in those solitudes, since first 55  
The flight of years began, have laid them  
down  
In their last sleep—the dead reign there alone.  
So shalt thou rest, and what if thou withdraw

29. share—plowshare. 51. Barcan—Barca refers to the desert region of North Africa, and is so used by the Latin poets; Bryant is here transferring its meaning and has in mind the "Great American Desert" which formerly occupied a large space on maps of the United States. 53. Oregon—the Columbia River. Lewis and Clark reached the mouth of the Columbia Nov. 7, 1805. 55. millions—The notion of America as having been peopled by a vanished race, a favorite concept of Bryant's, was part of the romantic anthropology of the day and found support in the theory that the Mound Builders were a people of high culture. See "The Prairies" of Bryant.

In silence from the living, and no friend  
 Take note of thy departure? All that  
     breathe 60  
 Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh  
 When thou art gone, the solemn brood of  
     care  
 Plod on, and each one as before will chase  
 His favorite phantom; yet all these shall  
     leave  
 Their mirth and their employments, and shall  
     come 65  
 And make their bed with thee. As the long  
     train  
 Of ages glide away, the sons of men,  
 The youth in life's green spring, and he who  
     goes  
 In the full strength of years, matron and  
     maid,  
 The speechless babe, and the gray-headed  
     man— 70  
 Shall one by one be gathered to thy side,  
 By those, who in their turn shall follow  
     them.

So live, that when thy summons comes to  
     join  
 The innumerable caravan, which moves  
 To that mysterious realm, where each shall  
     take 75  
 His chamber in the silent halls of death,  
 Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,  
 Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and  
     soothed  
 By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,  
 Like one who wraps the drapery of his  
     couch 80  
 About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

### THE YELLOW VIOLET

First published in the *Poems* of 1821. The importance of the poem, aside from its charm, is that it celebrates an American flower.

When beechen buds begin to swell,  
 And woods the blue-bird's warble know,  
 The yellow violet's modest bell  
 Peeps from the last year's leaves below.

68. **green**—"fresh" in some editions. 30. **painting tribes of light**—Note the eighteenth-century periphrasis for flowers.

Ere russet fields their green resume, 5  
     Sweet flower, I love, in forest bare,  
 To meet thee, when thy faint perfume  
     Alone is in the virgin air.

Of all her train, the hands of Spring  
     First plant thee in the watery mould, 10  
 And I have seen thee blossoming  
     Beside the snow-bank's edges cold.

Thy parent sun, who bade thee view  
     Pale skies, and chilling moisture sip,  
 Has bathed thee in his own bright hue, 15  
     And streaked with jet thy glowing lip.

Yet slight thy form, and low thy seat,  
     And earthward bent thy gentle eye,  
 Unapt the passing view to meet,  
     When loftier flowers are flaunting high. 20

Oft, in the sunless April day,  
     Thy early smile has stayed my walk;  
 But midst the gorgeous blooms of May,  
     I passed thee on thy humble stalk.

So they, who climb to wealth, forget 25  
     The friends in darker fortunes tried.  
 I copied them—but I regret  
     That I should ape the ways of pride.

And when again the genial hour  
     Awakes the painted tribes of light, 30  
 I'll not o'erlook the modest flower  
     That made the woods of April bright.

### INSCRIPTION FOR THE ENTRANCE TO A WOOD

First published in the *North American Review*, 1817, as "Fragment." Received its present title in the *Poems* of 1821. Poetical "inscriptions" were a favorite minor mode among English minor romantic poets like Bowles. The influence of landscape painting is to be noted in this poem.

Stranger, if thou hast learned a truth  
     which needs

No school of long experience, that the world  
Is full of guilt and misery, and hast seen  
Enough of all its sorrows, crimes, and cares,  
To tire thee of it, enter this wild wood 5  
And view the haunts of Nature. The calm  
shade

Shall bring a kindred calm, and the sweet  
breeze

That makes the green leaves dance, shall  
waft a balm

To thy sick heart. Thou wilt find nothing  
here

Of all that pained thee in the haunts of  
men 10

And made thee loathe thy life. The primal  
curse

Fell, it is true, upon the unsinning earth,  
But not in vengeance. God hath yoked to  
guilt

Her pale tormentor, misery. Hence, these  
shades

Are still the abodes of gladness; the thick  
roof 15

Of green and stirring branches is alive  
And musical with birds, that sing and sport  
In wantonness of spirit; while below

The squirrel, with raised paws and form  
erect,

Chirps merrily. Throngs of insects in the  
shade 20

Try their thin wings and dance in the warm  
beam

That waked them into life. Even the green  
trees

Partake the deep contentment; as they bend  
To the soft winds, the sun from the blue sky  
Looks in and sheds a blessing on the scene. 25  
Scarce less the cleft-born wild-flower seems to  
enjoy

Existence, than the wingèd plunderer  
That sucks its sweets. The massy rocks them-  
selves,

And the old and ponderous trunks of pros-  
trate trees

That lead from knoll to knoll a causey  
rude 30

Or bridge the sunken brook, and their dark  
roots,

With all their earth upon them, twisting  
high,

Breathe fixed tranquillity. The rivulet  
Sends forth glad sounds, and tripping o'er its  
bed

Of pebbly sands, or leaping down the  
rocks, 35

Seems, with continuous laughter, to rejoice  
In its own being. Softly tread the marge,  
Lest from her midway perch thou scare the  
wren

That dips her bill in water. The cool wind,  
That stirs the stream in play, shall come to  
thee, 40

Like one that loves thee nor will let thee pass  
Ungreeted, and shall give its light embrace.

# TO A WATERFOWL

Composed on a walk from Plainfield to  
Cummington, December 15, 1817, when  
Bryant was feeling "very forlorn and deso-  
late." Published in the *North American Re-  
view*, March, 1818; collected in *Poems* (1821).

Whither, midst falling dew,  
While glow the heavens with the last steps  
of day,

Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou  
pursue

Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye 5  
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee  
wrong,

As, darkly seen against the crimson sky,  
Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink  
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide, 10  
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink  
On the chafed ocean-side?

There is a Power whose care  
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast—  
The desert and illimitable air— 15  
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,  
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,

11. primal curse—*Cf.* Genesis 3:14 ff. 13. guilt—capitalized in some editions, as is  
misery in the next line. 30. causey—causeway.

Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,  
Though the dark night is near. 20

And soon that toil shall end;  
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and  
rest,  
And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall  
bend,  
Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven 25  
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet, on my  
heart  
Deeply has sunk the lesson thou hast given,  
And shall not soon depart.

He who, from zone to zone,  
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain  
flight, 30  
In the long way that I must tread alone,  
Will lead my steps aright.

### GREEN RIVER

First published in the second number of  
*The Idle Man*, edited by R. H. Dana (1821);  
and collected in *Poems* (1821). The poem  
was written in Great Barrington in 1819.

When breezes are soft and skies are fair,  
I steal an hour from study and care,  
And hie me away to the woodland scene,  
Where wanders the stream with waters of  
green,

As if the bright fringe of herbs on its brink 5  
Had given their stain to the wave they drink;  
And they, whose meadows it murmurs  
through,  
Have named the stream from its own fair  
hue.

Yet pure its waters—its shallows are bright  
With colored pebbles and sparkles of light, 10  
And clear the depths where its eddies play,  
And dimples deepen and whirl away,  
And the plane-tree's speckled arms o'er-  
shoot  
The swifter current that mines its root,

Through whose shifting leaves, as you walk  
the hill, 15  
The quivering glimmer of sun and rill,  
With a sudden flash on the eye is thrown,  
Like the ray that streams from the diamond-  
stone.

Oh, loveliest there the spring days come,  
With blossoms, and birds, and wild-bees'  
hum; 20  
The flowers of summer are fairest there,  
And freshest the breath of the summer air;  
And sweetest the golden autumn day  
In silence and sunshine glides away.

Yet, fair as thou art, thou shun'st to  
glide, 25  
Beautiful stream! by the village side;  
But windest away from haunts of men,  
To quiet valley and shaded glen;  
And forest, and meadow, and slope of hill,  
Around thee, are lonely, lovely, and still. 30  
Lonely—save when, by thy rippling tides,  
From thicket to thicket the angler glides;  
Or the simpler comes, with basket and book,  
For herbs of power on thy banks to look;  
Or haply, some idle dreamer, like me, 35  
To wander, and muse, and gaze on thee,  
Still—save the chirp of birds that feed  
On the river cherry and seedy reed,  
And thy own wild music gushing out  
With mellow murmur of fairy shout, 40  
From dawn to the blush of another day,  
Like traveller singing along his way.

That fairy music I never hear,  
Nor gaze on those waters so green and clear,  
And mark them winding away from sight, 45  
Darkened with shade or flashing with light,  
While o'er them the vine to its thicket clings,  
And the zephyr stoops to freshen his wings,  
But I wish that fate had left me free  
To wander these quiet haunts with thee, 50  
Till the eating cares of earth should depart,  
And the peace of the scene pass into my  
heart;  
And I envy thy stream, as it glides along  
Through its beautiful banks in a trance of  
song.

18. diamond-stone—The hyphen appears for the first time in the 1854 *Poems*. 33. simpler—herb-gatherer. 36. thee—followed by a period until 1854, when the present punctuation was adopted. 40. of—Reads "or" (1821); "and" (1832, 1836, 1843); "of" (1854).

Though forced to drudge for the dregs of	I often come to this quiet place,	
men,	To breathe the airs that ruffle thy face,	60
And scrawl strange words with the barbarous	And gaze upon thee in silent dream,	
pen,	For in thy lonely and lovely stream	
And mingle among the jostling crowd,	An image of that calm life appears	
Where the sons of strife are subtle and loud—	That won my heart in my greener years.	

## THE DEATH OF THE FLOWERS

First published in the *New York Review*, 1825; collected in *Poems* (1832).

The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year,  
 Of wailing winds, and naked woods, and meadows brown and sere.  
 Heaped in the hollows of the grove, the autumn leaves lie dead;  
 They rustle to the eddying gust, and to the rabbit's tread;  
 The robin and the wren are flown, and from the shrubs the jay,  
 And from the wood-top calls the crow through all the gloomy day. 5

Where are the flowers, the fair young flowers, that lately sprang and stood  
 In brighter light and softer airs, a beauteous sisterhood?  
 Alas! they all are in their graves, the gentle race of flowers  
 Are lying in their lowly beds, with the fair and good of ours. 10  
 The rain is falling where they lie, but the cold November rain  
 Calls not from out the gloomy earth the lovely ones again.

The wind-flower and the violet, they perished long ago,  
 And the brier-rose and the orchis died amid the summer glow;  
 But on the hills the golden-rod, and the aster in the wood,  
 And the yellow sun-flower by the brook in autumn beauty stood, 15  
 Till fell the frost from the clear cold heaven, as falls the plague on men,  
 And the brightness of their smile was gone, from upland, glade, and glen.

And now, when comes the calm mild day, as still such days will come,  
 To call the squirrel and the bee from out their winter home; 20  
 When the sound of dropping nuts is heard, though all the trees are still,  
 And twinkle in the smoky light the waters of the rill,  
 The south wind searches for the flowers whose fragrance late he bore,  
 And sighs to find them in the wood and by the stream no more.

And then I think of one who in her youthful beauty died, 25  
 The fair meek blossom that grew up and faded by my side.  
 In the cold moist earth we laid her, when the forests cast the leaf,  
 And we wept that one so lovely should have a life so brief:  
 Yet not unmeet it was that one, like that young friend of ours,  
 So gentle and so beautiful, should perish with the flowers. 30

62. stream—followed by a comma in 1821, 1832, 1836, which disappears in 1843.

"OH FAIREST OF THE  
RURAL MAIDS"

Written in 1820 and addressed to his future wife; published in the *Poems* of 1832.

Oh fairest of the rural maids!  
Thy birth was in the forest shades;  
Green boughs, and glimpses of the sky,  
Were all that met thine infant eye.

Thy sports, thy wanderings, when a child, 5  
Were ever in the sylvan wild;  
And all the beauty of the place  
Is in thy heart and on thy face.

The twilight of the trees and rocks  
Is in the light shade of thy locks; 10  
Thy step is as the wind, that weaves  
Its playful way among the leaves.

Thine eyes are springs, in whose serene  
And silent waters heaven is seen;  
Their lashes are the herbs that look 15  
On their young figures in the brook.

The forest depths, by foot unpressed,  
Are not more sinless than thy breast;  
The holy peace, that fills the air 20  
Of those calm solitudes, is there.

A FOREST HYMN

Published in the *United States Literary Gazette*, April 1, 1825, as "Forest Hymn," and collected in the *Poems* of 1832. Becomes "A Forest Hymn" (apparently to distinguish it from other "Hymns" by Bryant) in the illustrated edition of *Poems* (1847).

The groves were God's first temples. Ere man  
learned  
To hew the shaft,\* and lay the architrave,†  
And spread the roof above them—ere he  
framed  
The lofty vault, to gather and roll back  
The sound of anthems; in the darkling  
wood, 5

Amid the cool and silence, he knelt down,  
And offered to the Mightiest solemn thanks  
And supplication. For his simple heart  
Might not resist the sacred influences  
Which, from the stilly twilight of the place, 10  
And from the gray old trunks that high in  
heaven

Mingled their mossy boughs, and from the  
sound  
Of the invisible breath that swayed at once  
All their green tops, stole over him, and  
bowed

His spirit with the thought of boundless  
power 15

And inaccessible majesty. Ah, why  
Should we, in the world's riper years, neglect  
God's ancient sanctuaries, and adore

Only among the crowd, and under roofs  
That our frail hands have raised? Let me, at  
least, 20

Here, in the shadow of this aged wood,  
Offer one hymn—thrice happy, if it find  
Acceptance in His ear.

Father, thy hand  
Hath reared these venerable columns, thou  
Didst weave this verdant roof. Thou didst  
look down 25

Upon the naked earth, and, forthwith, rose  
All these fair ranks of trees. They, in thy sun,  
Budded, and shook their green leaves in thy  
breeze,

And shot toward heaven. The century-living  
crow,

Whose birth was in their tops, grew old and  
died 30

Among their branches, till, at last, they stood,  
As now they stand, massy, and tall, and dark,  
Fit shrine for humble worshipper to hold  
Communion with his Maker. These dim  
vaults,

These winding aisles, of human pomp or  
pride 35

Report not. No fantastic carvings show  
The boast of our vain race to change the form  
Of thy fair works. But thou art here—thou  
fill'st

The solitude. Thou art in the soft winds  
That run along the summit of these trees 40  
In music; thou art in the cooler breath  
That from the inmost darkness of the place

\* shaft—pillar. † architrave—the entablature resting on the column in classical architecture.

Comes, scarcely felt; the barky trunks, the  
ground,  
The fresh moist ground, are all instinct with  
thee.

Here is continual worship;—Nature, here, 45  
In the tranquillity that thou dost love,  
Enjoys thy presence. Noiselessly, around,  
From perch to perch, the solitary bird  
Passes; and yon clear spring, that, midst its  
herbs,

Wells softly forth and wandering steep the  
roots 50

Of half the mighty forest, tells no tale  
Of all the good it does. Thou hast not left  
Thyself without a witness, in the shades,  
Of thy perfections. Grandeur, strength, and  
grace

Are here to speak of thee. This mighty  
oak— 55

By whose immovable stem I stand and seem  
Almost annihilated—not a prince,  
In all that proud old world beyond the deep,  
E'er wore his crown as loftily as he  
Wears the green coronal of leaves with  
which 60

Thy hand has graced him. Nestled at his root  
Is beauty, such as blooms not in the glare  
Of the broad sun. That delicate forest flower,  
With scented breath and look so like a smile,  
Seems, as it issues from the shapeless  
mould, 65

An emanation of the indwelling Life,  
A visible token of the upholding Love,  
That are the soul of this great universe.

My heart is awed within me when I think  
Of the great miracle that still goes on, 70  
In silence, round me—the perpetual work  
Of thy creation, finished, yet renewed  
Forever. Written on thy works I read  
The lesson of thy own eternity.

Lo! all grow old and die—but see again, 75  
How on the faltering footsteps of decay  
Youth presses—ever gay and beautiful youth  
In all its beautiful forms. These lofty trees  
Wave not less proudly that their ancestors  
Moulder beneath them. Oh, there is not  
lost 80

One of earth's charms: upon her bosom yet,  
After the flight of untold centuries,  
The freshness of her far beginning lies  
And yet shall lie. Life mocks the idle hate

Of his arch-enemy Death—yea, seats him-  
self 85

Upon the tyrant's throne—the sepulchre,  
And of the triumphs of his ghastly foe  
Makes his own nourishment. For he came  
forth

From thine own bosom, and shall have no  
end.

There have been holy men who hid them-  
selves 90

Deep in the woody wilderness, and gave  
Their lives to thought and prayer, till they  
outlived

The generation born with them, nor seemed  
Less aged than the hoary trees and rocks  
Around them;—and there have been holy  
men 95

Who deemed it were not well to pass life  
thus.

But let me often to these solitudes  
Retire, and in thy presence reassure  
My feeble virtue. Here its enemies,  
The passions, at thy plainer footsteps  
shrink 100

And tremble and are still. O God! when thou  
Dost scare the world with tempests, set on  
fire

The heavens with falling thunderbolts, or fill,  
With all the waters of the firmament,  
The swift dark whirlwind that uproots the  
woods 105

And drowns the villages; when, at thy call,  
Uprises the great deep and throws himself  
Upon the continent, and overwhelms  
Its cities—who forgets not, at the sight  
Of these tremendous tokens of thy power, 110  
His pride, and lays his strifes and follies by?  
Oh, from these sterner aspects of thy face  
Spare me and mine, nor let us need the  
wrath

Of the mad unchained elements to teach  
Who rules them. Be it ours to meditate, 115  
In these calm shades, thy milder majesty,  
And to the beautiful order of thy works  
Learn to conform the order of our lives.

#### SONG OF MARION'S MEN

First published in the *New York Mirror*,  
November, 1831, and collected in *Poems*



(1832). Bryant prefaces the poem with the following note: "The exploits of General Francis Marion, the famous partisan warrior of South Carolina, form an interesting chapter in the annals of the American Revolution. The British troops were so harassed by the irregular and successful warfare which he kept up at the head of a few daring followers, that they sent an officer to remonstrate with him for not coming into the open field and fighting 'like a gentleman and a Christian.'"

Our band is few but true and tried,  
 Our leader frank and bold;  
 The British soldier trembles  
 When Marion's name is told.  
 Our fortress is the good greenwood,  
 Our tent the cypress-tree;  
 We know the forest round us,  
 As seamen know the sea.  
 We know its walls of thorny vines,  
 Its glades of reedy grass,  
 Its safe and silent islands  
 Within the dark morass.

Woe to the English soldiery  
 That little dread us near!  
 On them shall light at midnight  
 A strange and sudden fear:  
 When, waking to their tents on fire,  
 They grasp their arms in vain,  
 And they who stand to face us  
 Are beat to earth again;  
 And they who fly in terror deem  
 A mighty host behind,  
 And hear the tramp of thousands  
 Upon the hollow wind.

Then sweet the hour that brings release 25  
 From danger and from toil:  
 We talk the battle over,  
 And share the battle's spoil.  
 The woodland rings with laugh and shout,  
 As if a hunt were up, 30  
 And woodland flowers are gathered  
 To crown the soldier's cup.  
 With merry songs we mock the wind  
 That in the pine-top grieves,

And slumber long and sweetly 35  
 On beds of oaken leaves.

Well knows the fair and friendly moon  
 The band that Marion leads—  
 The glitter of their rifles,  
 The scampering of their steeds. 40  
 'Tis life to guide the fiery barb  
 Across the moonlight plain;  
 'Tis life to feel the night-wind  
 That lifts the tossing mane.  
 A moment in the British camp— 45  
 A moment—and away  
 Back to the pathless forest,  
 Before the peep of day.

Grave men there are by broad Santee, 5  
 Grave men with hoary hairs; 50  
 Their hearts are all with Marion,  
 For Marion are their prayers.  
 And lovely ladies greet our band  
 With kindest welcoming, 10  
 With smiles like those of summer, 55  
 And tears like those of spring.  
 For them we wear these trusty arms,  
 And lay them down no more  
 Till we have driven the Briton, 60  
 Forever, from our shore.

## TO THE FRINGED GENTIAN

In *Poems* (1832). Composed in 1829.

Thou blossom bright with autumn dew,  
 And colored with the heaven's own blue,  
 That openest when the quiet light  
 Succeeds the keen and frosty night.

Thou comest not when violets lean 5  
 O'er wandering brooks and springs unseen,  
 Or columbines, in purple dressed,  
 Nod o'er the ground-bird's hidden nest.

Thou waitest late and com'st alone,  
 When woods are bare and birds are flown, 10  
 And frosts and shortening days portend  
 The aged year is near his end.

41. *barb*—literally, a Moorish horse; here, any swift steed. 49. *Santee*—the lower Santee River, in South Carolina, held by the British at the time of Marion's activities, and bordered by the great plantations.

Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye  
 Look through its fringes to the sky,  
 Blue—blue—as if that sky let fall 15  
 A flower from its cerulean wall.

I would that thus, when I shall see  
 The hour of death draw near to me,  
 Hope, blossoming within my heart,  
 May look to heaven as I depart. 20

## THE PRAIRIES

First published in the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, December, 1833; collected in *Poems* (1834). Bryant visited Illinois in 1832, and there "experienced" the prairie country for the first time.

These are the gardens of the Desert, these  
 The unshorn fields, boundless and beautiful,  
 For which the speech of England has no  
 name—

The Prairies. I behold them for the first,  
 And my heart swells, while the dilated  
 sight 5  
 Takes in the encircling vastness. Lo! they  
 stretch,

In airy undulations, far away,  
 As if the ocean, in his gentlest swell,  
 Stood still, with all his rounded billows  
 fixed,

And motionless forever.—Motionless?— 10  
 No—they are all unchained again. The  
 clouds

Sweep over with their shadows, and, be-  
 neath,

The surface rolls and fluctuates to the eye;  
 Dark hollows seem to glide along and chase  
 The sunny ridges. Breezes of the South! 15  
 Who toss the golden and the flame-like  
 flowers,

And pass the prairie-hawk that, poised on  
 high,

Flaps his broad wings, yet moves not—ye  
 have played

Among the palms of Mexico and vines  
 Of Texas, and have crisped the limpid  
 brooks 20

That from the fountains of Sonora glide  
 Into the calm Pacific—have ye fanned  
 A nobler or a lovelier scene than this?

Man hath no power in all this glorious  
 work:

The hand that built the firmament hath  
 heaved 25

And smoothed these verdant swells, and  
 sown their slopes

With herbage, planted them with island  
 groves,

And hedged them round with forests. Fit-  
 ting floor

For this magnificent temple of the sky—  
 With flowers whose glory and whose mul-  
 titude 30

Rival the constellations! The great heavens  
 Seem to stoop down upon the scene in  
 love,—

A nearer vault, and of a tenderer blue,  
 Than that which bends above our eastern  
 hills.

As o'er the verdant waste I guide my  
 steed, 35

Among the high rank grass that sweeps his  
 sides

The hollow beating of his footstep seems  
 A sacrilegious sound. I think of those

Upon whose rest he tramples. Are they  
 here—

The dead of other days?—and did the  
 dust 40

Of these fair solitudes once stir with life  
 And burn with passion? Let the mighty

mounds

That overlook the rivers, or that rise  
 In the dim forest crowded with old oaks,

Answer. A race, that long has passed  
 away, 45

Built them;—a disciplined and populous  
 race

Heaped, with long toil, the earth, while yet  
 the Greek

3. no name—"Prairie" came into the language from the French. 18. moves not—"I have seen the prairie-hawk balancing himself in the air for hours together, apparently over the same spot, probably watching his prey." (Bryant's note) 21. Sonora—a state in Northwest Mexico. 40. dead—Cf. note to line 44 of "Thanatopsis." 42. mounds—supposed to have been constructed by the vanished Mound Builders, but now believed to be of Indian origin.

Was hewing the Pentelicus to forms  
 Of symmetry, and rearing on its rock  
 The glittering Parthenon. These ample  
     fields 50  
 Nourished their harvests, here their herds  
     were fed,  
 When haply by their stalls the bison lowed,  
 And bowed his manèd shoulder to the yoke.  
 All day this desert murmured with their toils,  
 Till twilight blushed, and lovers walked,  
     and wooed 55  
 In a forgotten language, and old tunes,  
 From instruments of unremembered form,  
 Gave the soft winds a voice. The red man  
     came—  
 The roaming hunter tribes, warlike and  
     fierce,  
 And the mound-builders vanished from the  
     earth. 60  
 The solitude of centuries untold  
 Has settled where they dwelt. The prairie-  
     wolf  
 Hunts in their meadows, and his fresh-dug  
     den  
 Yawns by my path. The gopher mines the  
     ground  
 Where stood their swarming cities. All is  
     gone; 65  
 All—save the piles of earth that hold their  
     bones,  
 The platforms where they worshipped un-  
     known gods,  
 The barriers which they builded from the  
     soil  
 To keep the foe at bay—till o'er the walls  
 The wild beleaguers broke, and, one by  
     one, 70  
 The strongholds of the plain were forced,  
     and heaped  
 With corpses. The brown vultures of the  
     wood  
 Flocked to those vast uncovered sepulchres,  
 And sat unscared and silent at their feast.  
 Haply some solitary fugitive, 75  
 Lurking in marsh and forest, till the sense  
 Of desolation and of fear became  
 Bitterer than death, yielded himself to die.  
 Man's better nature triumphed then. Kind  
     words

Welcomed and soothed him; the rude con-  
     querors 80

Seated the captive with their chiefs; he chose  
 A bride among their maidens, and at length  
 Seemed to forget—yet ne'er forgot—the wife  
 Of his first love, and her sweet little ones,  
 Butchered, amid their shrieks, with all his  
     race. 85

Thus change the forms of being. Thus  
     arise

Races of living things, glorious in strength,  
 And perish, as the quickening breath of God  
 Fills them, or is withdrawn. The red man,  
     too,

Has left the blooming wilds he ranged so  
     long, 90

And, nearer to the Rocky Mountains, sought  
 A wilder hunting-ground. The beaver builds  
 No longer by these streams, but far away,  
 On waters whose blue surface ne'er gave  
     back

The white man's face—among Missouri's  
     springs, 95

And pools whose issues swell the Oregon—  
 He rears his little Venice. In these plains  
 The bison feeds no more. Twice twenty  
     leagues

Beyond remotest smoke of hunter's camp,  
 Roams the majestic brute, in herds that  
     shake 100

The earth with thundering steps—yet here I  
     meet

His ancient footprints stamped beside the  
     pool.

Still this great solitude is quick with life.

Myriads of insects, gaudy as the flowers

They flutter over, gentle quadrupeds, 105

And birds, that scarce have learned the fear  
     of man,

Are here, and sliding reptiles of the ground,  
 Startlingly beautiful. The graceful deer

Bounds to the wood at my approach. The  
     bee,

A more adventurous colonist than man, 110  
 With whom he came across the eastern deep,  
 Fills the savannas with his murmurings,  
 And hides his sweets, as in the golden age,  
 Within the hollow oak. I listen long

48. *Pentelicus*—Marble from the quarries of Pentelicus was much prized by the classical Athenians; it was used for the Parthenon at Athens. 96. *Oregon*—the Columbia River.

To his domestic hum, and think I hear 115  
 The sound of that advancing multitude  
 Which soon shall fill these deserts. From the  
 ground  
 Comes up the laugh of children, the soft  
 voice  
 Of maidens, and the sweet and solemn hymn  
 Of Sabbath worshippers. The low of  
 herds 120  
 Blends with the rustling of the heavy grain  
 Over the dark brown furrows. All at once  
 A fresher wind sweeps by, and breaks my  
 dream,  
 And I am in the wilderness alone.

## THE BATTLE-FIELD

First published in the *Democratic Review*,  
 October, 1837; collected in *Poems* (1839).  
 The ninth stanza is one of the most quoted  
 passages in Bryant. The setting is purely  
 imaginary. The poem forms part of the  
 "peace literature" of the thirties and forties.  
 See M. E. Curti, *The American Peace Cru-*  
*sade, 1815-1860*, Duke University Press, 1929.

Once this soft turf, this rivulet's sands,  
 Were trampled by a hurrying crowd,  
 And fiery hearts and armèd hands  
 Encountered in the battle-cloud.

Ah! never shall the land forget 5  
 How gushed the life-blood of her brave—  
 Gushed, warm with hope and courage yet,  
 Upon the soil they fought to save.

Now all is calm, and fresh, and still;  
 Alone the chirp of flitting bird, 10  
 And talk of children on the hill,  
 And bell of wandering kine, are heard.

No solemn host goes trailing by  
 The black-mouthed gun and staggering  
 wain;  
 Men start not at the battle-cry, 15  
 Oh, be it never heard again!

Soon rested those who fought; but thou  
 Who minglest in the harder strife  
 For truths which men receive not now,  
 Thy warfare only ends with life. 20

A friendless warfare! lingering long  
 Through weary day and weary year,  
 A wild and many-weaponed throng  
 Hang on thy front, and flank, and rear.

Yet nerve thy spirit to the proof, 25  
 And blench not at thy chosen lot.  
 The timid good may stand aloof,  
 The sage may frown—yet faint thou not.

Nor heed the shaft too surely cast,  
 The foul and hissing bolt of scorn; 30  
 For with thy side shall dwell, at last,  
 The victory of endurance born.

Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again;  
 Th' eternal years of God are hers;  
 But Error, wounded, writhes in pain, 35  
 And dies among his worshippers.

Yea, though thou lie upon the dust,  
 When they who helped thee flee in fear,  
 Die full of hope and manly trust,  
 Like those who fell in battle here. 40

Another hand thy sword shall wield,  
 Another hand the standard wave,  
 Till from the trumpet's mouth is pealed  
 The blast of triumph o'er thy grave.

THE ANTIQUITY OF  
FREEDOM

First published in the *Knickerbocker Mag-*  
*azine*, May, 1842, and collected in *The Foun-*  
*tain and Other Poems* (1842). See the intro-  
 ductory note to "The Battle-Field."

Here are old trees, tall oaks, and gnarled  
 pines,  
 That stream with gray-green mosses; here  
 the ground

Was never trenched by spade, and flowers  
 spring up

Unsown, and die ungathered. It is sweet  
 To linger here, among the flitting birds 5  
 And leaping squirrels, wandering brooks,  
 and winds

That shake the leaves, and scatter, as they  
 pass,

A fragrance from the cedars, thickly set

With pale-blue berries. In these peaceful  
shades—

Peaceful, unpruned, immeasurably old— 10  
My thoughts go up the long dim path of  
years,

Back to the earliest days of liberty.

O FREEDOM! thou art not, as poets dream,  
A fair young girl, with light and delicate  
limbs,

And wavy tresses gushing from the cap 15  
With which the Roman master crowned his  
slave

When he took off the gyves. A bearded man,  
Armed to the teeth, art thou; one mailed  
hand

Grasps the broad shield, and one the sword;  
thy brow,

Glorious in beauty though it be, is  
scarred 20

With tokens of old wars; thy massive limbs  
Are strong with struggling. Power at thee  
has launched

His bolts, and with his lightnings smitten  
thee;

They could not quench the life thou hast  
from heaven;

Merciless Power has dug thy dungeon  
deep, 25

And his swart armorers, by a thousand fires,  
Have forged thy chain; yet, while he deems  
thee bound,

The links are shivered, and the prison-  
walls

Fall outward; terribly thou springest forth,  
As springs the flame above a burning  
pile, 30

And shoutest to the nations, who return  
Thy shoutings, while the pale oppressor flies.

Thy birthright was not given by human  
hands:

Thou wert twin-born with man. In pleasant  
fields,

While yet our race was few, thou sat'st  
with him, 35

To tend the quiet flock and watch the stars,  
And teach the reed to utter simple airs.

Thou by his side, amid the tangled wood,

Didst war upon the panther and the wolf,  
His only foes; and thou with him didst  
draw 40

The earliest furrow on the mountain-side,  
Soft with the deluge. Tyranny himself,  
Thy enemy, although of reverend look,  
Hoary with many years, and far obeyed,  
Is later born than thou; and as he meets 45  
The grave defiance of thine elder eye,  
The usurper trembles in his fastnesses.

Thou shalt wax stronger with the lapse of  
years,

But he shall fade into a feebler age—  
Feebler, yet subtler. He shall weave his  
snares, 50

And spring them on thy careless steps, and  
clap

His withered hands, and from their ambush  
call

His hordes to fall upon thee. He shall send  
Quaint maskers, wearing fair and gallant  
forms

To catch thy gaze, and uttering graceful  
words 55

To charm thy ear; while his sly imps, by  
stealth,

Twine round thee threads of steel, light  
thread on thread,

That grow to fetters; or bind down thy arms  
With chains concealed in chaplets. Oh! not  
yet

Mayst thou unbrace thy corslet, nor lay by 60  
Thy sword; nor yet, O Freedom! close thy  
lids

In slumber; for thine enemy never sleeps,  
And thou must watch and combat till the  
day

Of the new earth and heaven. But wouldst  
thou rest

Awhile from tumult and the frauds of  
men, 65

These old and friendly solitudes invite  
Thy visit. They, while yet the forest-trees

Were young upon the unviolated earth,  
And yet the moss-stains on the rock were  
new,

Beheld thy glorious childhood, and re-  
joiced. 70

15. cap—the so-called "Liberty Cap" familiar in the French Revolution. 60. corslet—body armor

## THE POET

First published in *Thirty Poems* (1864).  
With this poem should be compared Bryant's  
lectures on poetry in Vol. V of the *Life and*  
*Works*.

Thou, who wouldst wear the name  
Of poet mid thy brethren of mankind,  
And clothe in words of flame  
Thoughts that shall live within the gen-  
eral mind!  
Deem not the framing of a deathless lay 5  
The pastime of a drowsy summer day.

But gather all thy powers,  
And wreak them on the verse that thou  
dost weave,  
And in thy lonely hours,  
At silent morning or at wakeful eve, 10  
While the warm current tingles through thy  
veins,  
Set forth the burning words in fluent strains.

No smooth array of phrase,  
Artfully sought and ordered though it be,  
Which the cold rhymer lays 15  
Upon his page with languid industry,  
Can wake the listless pulse to livelier speed,  
Or fill with sudden tears the eyes that read.

The secret wouldst thou know 19  
To touch the heart or fire the blood at will?  
Let thine own eyes o'erflow;  
Let thy lips quiver with the passionate  
thrill;  
Seize the great thought, ere yet its power be  
past,  
And bind, in words, the fleet emotion fast.

Then, should thy verse appear 25  
Halting and harsh, and all unaptly  
wrought,  
Touch the crude line with fear,  
Save in the moment of impassioned  
thought;  
Then summon back the original glow, and  
mend  
The strain with rapture that with fire was  
penned. 30

8. *wreak*—force. 27. *Touch*—that is, fear to touch the crude line.

Yet let no empty gust  
Of passion find an utterance in thy lay,  
A blast that whirls the dust  
Along the howling street and dies away;  
But feelings of calm power and mighty  
sweep, 35  
Like currents journeying through the wind-  
less deep.

Seek'st thou, in living lays,  
To limn the beauty of the earth and sky?  
Before thine inner gaze  
Let all that beauty in clear vision lie; 40  
Look on it with exceeding love, and write  
The words inspired by wonder and delight.

Of tempests wouldst thou sing,  
Or tell of battles—make thyself a part  
Of the great tumult; cling 45  
To the tossed wreck with terror in thy  
heart;  
Scale, with the assaulting host, the rampart's  
height,  
And strike and struggle in the thickest fight.

So shalt thou frame a lay  
That haply may endure from age to  
age, 50  
And they who read shall say:  
"What witchery hangs upon this poet's  
page!  
What art is his the written spells to find  
That sway from mood to mood the willing  
mind!"

## THE DEATH OF LINCOLN

As "Abraham Lincoln: Poetical Tribute to the Memory of Abraham Lincoln," this poem was published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, January, 1866. Bryant indicates in a note that it was written immediately on hearing of the assassination in April, 1865. Collected in *Poems* (1871), under the present title.

Oh, slow to smite and swift to spare,  
Gentle and merciful and just!  
Who, in the fear of God, didst bear  
The sword of power, a nation's trust!

In sorrow by thy bier we stand, Amid the awe that hushes all, And speak the anguish of a land That shook with horror at thy fall.	5	Whose proudest monument shall be The broken fetters of the slave.
Thy task is done; the bond are free: We bear thee to an honored grave,	10	Pure was thy life; its bloody close Hath placed thee with the sons of light, Among the noble host of those Who perished in the cause of Right.

## ON POETRY IN ITS RELATION TO OUR AGE AND COUNTRY

In April, 1825, Bryant delivered four lectures before the New York Athenaeum, the texts of which, as delivered, have not been preserved. But in his edition of the *Prose Writings* Parke Godwin printed the lectures from Bryant's manuscript notes, which were, in Godwin's opinion, "no more than sketches or suggestions." To the reader, however, the essays seem complete in themselves, and the third of them is here reproduced from Godwin's text. The first was entitled "On the Nature of Poetry"; the second, "The Value and Uses of Poetry"; and the fourth, "On Originality and Imitation." The opening inevitably suggests Macaulay's theory that as the arts of civilization advance, poetry necessarily declines. This may be found, among other places, in Macaulay's essay on Dryden, published in 1828. Bryant's discussion of the present and probable future of American literature is one of a number of similar discussions by his literary contemporaries.

**A**N OPINION prevails, which neither wants the support of respectable names nor of plausible reasonings, that the art of poetry, in common with its sister arts, painting and sculpture, cannot in the present age be cultivated with the same degree of success as formerly. It has been supposed that the progress of reason, of science, and of the useful arts has a tendency to narrow the sphere of the imagination, and to repress the enthusiasm of the affections. Poetry, it is alleged, whose office it was to nurse the infancy of the human race, and to give it its first lessons of wisdom, having fulfilled the part to which she was appointed, now resigns her charge to severer instructors. Others, again, refining upon this idea, maintain that not only the age in which we live must fail to produce anything to rival the productions of the ancient masters of song, but that our own country, of all parts of the globe, is likely to remain the most distant from such a distinction.

Our citizens are held to possess, in a remarkable degree, the heedful, calculating, prosaic spirit of the age, while our country is decried as peculiarly barren of the materials of poetry. The scenery of our land these reasoners admit to be beautiful, but they urge that it is the beauty of a face without expression; that it wants the associations of tradition which are the soul and interest of scenery; that it wants the national superstitions which linger yet in every district in Europe, and the legends of distant and dark ages and of wild and unsettled times of which the old world reminds you at every step. Nor can our country, they say, ever be more fruitful of these materials than at present. For this is not an age to give birth to new superstitions, but to explode and root out old,

however harmless and agreeable they may be, while half the world is already wondering how little the other half will finally believe. Is it likely, then, that a multitude of interesting traditions will spring up in our land to ally themselves with every mountain, every hill, every forest, every river, and every tributary brook. There may be some passages of our early history which associate themselves with particular places, but the argument is that the number of these will never be greatly augmented. The genius of our nation is quiet and commercial. Our people are too much in love with peace and gain, the state of society is too settled, and the laws too well enforced and respected, to allow of wild and strange adventures. There is no romance either in our character, our history, or our condition of society; and, therefore, it is neither likely to encourage poetry, nor capable of supplying it with those materials—materials drawn from domestic traditions and manners—which render it popular.

If these views of the tendency of the present age, and the state of things in our country, are to be received as true, it must be acknowledged that they are not only exceedingly discouraging to those who make national literature a matter of pride, but, what is worse, that they go far toward causing that very inferiority on which they so strongly insist. Not that there is any danger that the demand for contemporary poetry will entirely cease. Verses have always been, and always will be written, and will always find readers; but it is of some consequence that they should be good verses, that they should exert the healthful and beneficial influences which I consider as belonging to the highest productions of the art; not feebly and imperfectly, but fully and effectually.

If, however, excellence in any art is believed to be unattainable, it will never be attained. There is, indeed, no harm in representing it as it really is, in literature as in every other pursuit, as rare and difficult, for by this means they who aspire to it are incited to more vigorous exertions. The mind of man glories in nothing more than in struggling successfully with difficulty, and nothing more excites our interest and admiration than the view of this struggle and triumph. The distinction of having done what few are able to do is the more enviable from its unfrequency, and attracts a multitude of competitors who catch each other's ardor and imitate each other's diligence. But if you go a step farther, and persuade those who are actuated by a generous ambition that this difficulty amounts to an impossibility, you extinguish their zeal at once. You destroy hope, and with it strength; you drive from the attempt those who were most likely and most worthy to succeed, and you put in their place a crowd of inferior contestants, satisfied with a low measure of excellence, and incapable of apprehending anything higher. Should, then, the views of this subject of which I have spoken be untrue, we may occasion much mischief by embracing them; and it becomes us, before we adopt them, to give them an attentive examination, and to be perfectly satisfied of their soundness.

But, if it be a fact that poetry in the present age is unable to attain the same degree of excellence as formerly, it cannot certainly be ascribed to any change in the original and natural faculties and dispositions of mind by which it is produced and by which it is enjoyed. The theory that men have degenerated in their mental powers and moral temperament is even more absurd than the notion of a decline in their physical strength, and is too fanciful to be com-



bated by grave reasoning. It would be difficult, I fancy, to persuade the easiest credulity that the imagination of man has become, with the lapse of ages, less active and less capable of shaping the materials at its command into pictures of majesty and beauty. Is anybody whimsical enough to suppose that the years  
5 that have passed since the days of Homer have made men's hearts cold and insensible, or deadened the delicacy of their moral perceptions, or rendered them less susceptible of cultivation? All the sources of poetry in the mind, and all the qualities to which it owes its power over the mind, are assuredly left us. Degeneracy, if it has taken place, must be owing to one of two things—either  
10 to the absence of those circumstances which, in former times, developed and cherished the poetical faculty to an extraordinary degree, or to the existence of other intellectual interests which, in the present age, tend to repress its natural exercise.

What, then, were the circumstances which fostered the art of poetry in ancient times? They have been defined to be the mystery impressed on all the  
15 operations of nature as yet not investigated and traced to their laws—the beautiful systems of ancient mythology, and, after their extinction, the superstitions that linger like ghosts in the twilight of a later age. Let us examine separately each of these alleged advantages. That there is something in whatever is unknown and inscrutable which strongly excites the imagination and awes the  
20 heart, particularly when connected with things of unusual vastness and grandeur, is not to be denied. But I deny that much of this mystery is apparent to an ignorant age, and I maintain that no small degree of inquiry and illumination is necessary to enable the mind to perceive it. He who takes all things  
25 to be as they appear, who supposes the earth to be a great plain, the sun a moving ball of fire, the heavens a vault of sapphire, and the stars a multitude of little flames lighted up in its arches—what does he think of mysteries, or care for them? But enlighten him a little further. Teach him that the earth is an immense sphere; that the wide land whose bounds he knows so imperfectly is  
30 an isle in the great oceans that flow all over it; talk to him of the boundlessness of the skies, and the army of worlds that move through them—and, by means of the knowledge that you communicate, you have opened to him a vast field of the unknown and the wonderful. Thus it ever was and ever will be with the human mind; everything which it knows introduces to its observation a greater  
35 multitude of things which it does not know; the clearing up of one mystery conducts it to another; all its discoveries are bounded by a circle of doubt and ignorance which is wide in proportion to the knowledge it enfolds. It is a pledge of the immortal destinies of the human intellect that it is forever drawn by a strong attraction to the darker edge of this circle, and forever attempting  
40 to penetrate the obscurities beyond. The old world, then, is welcome to its mysteries; we need not envy it on that account; for, in addition to our superior knowledge and as a consequence of it, we have even more of them than it, and they are loftier, deeper, and more spiritual.

But the mythologies of antiquity!—in particular, the beautiful mythologies  
45 of Greece and Rome, of which so much enters into the charming remains of ancient poetry! Beautiful those mythologies unquestionably were, and exceedingly varied and delightfully adapted to many of the purposes of poetry; yet it

may be doubted whether, on the whole, the art gained more by them than it lost. For remark that, so far as mystery is a quality of poetry, it has been taken away almost entirely by the myth. The fault of the myth was that it accounted for everything. It had a god for every operation of nature—a Jupiter to distil the showers and roll the thunder, a Phoebus to guide the chariot of the sun, a divinity to breathe the winds, a divinity to pour out every fountain. It left nothing in obscurity; everything was seen. Its very beauty consisted in minute disclosures. Thus the imagination was delighted, but neither the imagination nor the feelings were stirred up from their utmost depths. That system gave us the story of a superior and celestial race of beings, to whom human passions were attributed, and who were, like ourselves, susceptible of suffering; but it elevated them so far above the creatures of earth in power, in knowledge, and in security from the calamities of our condition, that they could be the subjects of little sympathy. Therefore it is that the mythological poetry of the ancients is as cold as it is beautiful, as unaffecting as it is faultless. And the genius of this mythological poetry, carried into the literature of a later age, where it was cultivated with a less sincere and earnest spirit, has been the destruction of all nature and simplicity. Men forsook the sure guidance of their own feelings and impressions, and fell into gross offences against taste. They wished to describe the passion of love, and they talked of Venus and her boy Cupid and his bow; they would speak of the freshness and glory of morning, and they fell to prattling of Phoebus and his steeds. No wonder that poetry has been thought a trifling art when thus practiced. For my part I cannot but think that human beings, placed among the things of this earth, with their affections and sympathies, their joys and sorrows, and the accidents of fortune to which they are liable, are infinitely a better subject for poetry than any imaginary race of creatures whatever. Let the fountain tell me of the flocks that have drank at it; of the village girl that has gathered spring flowers on its margin; the traveller that has slaked his thirst there in the hot noon, and blessed its waters; the school-boy that has pulled the nuts from the hazels that hang over it as it leaps and sparkles in its cool basin; let it speak of youth and health and purity and gladness, and I care not for the naiad that pours it out. If it must have a religious association, let it murmur of the invisible goodness that fills and feeds its reservoirs in the darkness of the earth. The admirers of poetry, then, may give up the ancient mythology without a sigh. Its departure has left us what is better than all it has taken away: it has left us men and women; it has left us the creatures and things of God's universe, to the simple charm of which the cold splendor of that system blinded men's eyes, and to the magnificence of which the rapid progress of science is every day adding new wonders and glories. It has left us, also, a more sublime and affecting religion, whose truths are broader, higher, nobler than any outlook to which its random conjectures ever attained.

With respect to later superstitions, traces of which linger yet in many districts of the civilized world—such as the belief in witchcraft, astrology, the agency of foul spirits in the affairs of men, in ghosts, fairies, water-sprites, and goblins of the wood and the mine—I would observe that the ages which gave birth to this fantastic brood are not those which have produced the noblest

specimens of poetry. Their rise supposes a state of society too rude for the successful cultivation of the art. Nor does it seem to me that the bigoted and implicit reception of them is at all favorable to the exercise of poetic talent. Poetry, it is true, sometimes produces a powerful effect by appealing to that  
 5 innate love of the supernatural which lies at the bottom of every man's heart and mind, and which all are willing to indulge, some freely and some by stealth, but it does this for the most part by means of those superstitions which exist rather in tradition than in serious belief. It finds them more flexible and accommodating; it is able to mould them to its purposes, and at liberty to re-  
 10 ject all that is offensive. Accordingly, we find that even the poets of superstitious ages have been fond of going back to the wonders and prodigies of elder days. Those who invented fictions for the age of chivalry, which one would be apt to think had marvels enough of its own, delighted to astonish their readers with tales of giants, dragons, hippogriffs, and enchanters, the home of which  
 15 was laid in distant ages, or, at least, in remote countries. The best witch ballad, with the exception, perhaps, of "Tam o'Shanter," that I know of is Hogg's "Witch of Fyfe," yet both these were written long after the belief in witches had been laughed out of countenance.

It is especially the privilege of an age which has no engrossing superstitions  
 20 of its own, to make use in its poetry of those of past ages; to levy contributions from the credulity of all time, and thus to diversify indefinitely the situations in which its human agents are placed. If these materials are managed with sufficient skill to win the temporary assent of the reader to the probability of the supernatural circumstances related, the purpose of the poet is answered.  
 25 This is precisely the condition of the present age; it has the advantage over all ages that have preceded it in the abundance of those collected materials, and its poets have not been slow to avail themselves of their aid.

In regard to the circumstances which are thought in the present age to repress and limit the exercise of the poetical faculty, the principal if not the only  
 30 one is supposed to be the prevalence of studies and pursuits unfavorable to the cultivation of the imagination and to enthusiasm of feeling. True it is that there are studies and pursuits which principally call into exercise other faculties of the mind, and that they are competitors with Poetry for the favor of the public. But it is not certain that the patronage bestowed on them would be  
 35 extended to her, even if they should cease to exist. Nay, there is strong reason to suppose that they have done something to extend her influence, for they have certainly multiplied the number of readers, and everybody who reads at all sometimes reads poetry, and generally professes to admire what the best judges pronounce excellent, and, perhaps, in time come to enjoy it. Various inclina-  
 40 tions continue, as heretofore, to impel one individual to one pursuit, and another to another—one to chemistry and another to poetry—yet I cannot see that their different labors interfere with each other, or that, because the chemist prosecutes his science successfully, therefore the poet should lose his inspiration. Take the example of Great Britain. In no country are the sciences studied with  
 45 greater success, yet in no country is poetry pursued with more ardor. Spring

16. Hogg's—James Hogg (1770-1835), the Scotch poet known as "The Ettrick Shepherd."

and autumn reign hand in hand in her literature; it is loaded at once with blossoms and fruits. Does the poetry of that island at the present day—the poetry of Wordsworth, Scott, Coleridge, Byron, Southey, Shelley, and others—smack of the chilling tendencies of the physical sciences? Or, rather, is it not bold, varied, impassioned, irregular, and impatient of precise laws beyond that of any former age? Indeed, has it not the freshness, the vigor, and perhaps also the disorder, of a new literature? 5

The amount of knowledge necessary to be possessed by all who would keep pace with the age, as much greater as it is than formerly, is not, I apprehend, in danger of oppressing and smothering poetical talent. Knowledge is the material with which Genius builds her fabrics. The greater its abundance, the more power is required to dispose it into order and beauty, but the more vast and magnificent will be the structure. All great poets have been men of great knowledge. Some have gathered it from books, as Spencer and Milton; others from keen observation of men and things, as Homer and Shakespeare. On the other hand, the poetry of Ossian, whether genuine or not, is an instance of no inconsiderable poetical talent struggling with the disadvantages of a want of knowledge. It is this want which renders it so singularly monotonous. The poverty of the poet's ideas confined his mind to a narrow circle, and his poems are a series of changes rung upon a few thoughts and a few images. Single passages are beautiful and affecting, but each poem, as a whole, is tiresome and uninteresting. 10 15 20

I come, in the last place, to consider the question of our own expectations in literature, and the probability of our producing in the new world anything to rival the immortal poems of the old. Many of the remarks already made on the literary spirit of the present age will apply also to this part of the subject. Indeed, in this point of view, we should do ill to despair of our country, at least until the lapse of many years shall seem to have settled the question against us. Where the fountains of knowledge are by the roadside, and where the volumes from which poetic enthusiasms are caught and fed are in everybody's hands, it would be singularly strange if, amid the multitude of pursuits which occupy our citizens, nobody should think of taking verse as a path to fame. Yet, if it shall be chosen and pursued with the characteristic ardor of our countrymen, what can prevent its being brought to the same degree of perfection here as in other countries? Not the want of encouragement surely, for the literary man needs but little to stimulate his exertions, and with that little his exertions are undoubtedly greater. Who would think of fattening a race-horse? Complaints of the poverty of poets are as old as their art, but I never heard that they wrote the worse verses for it. It is enough, probably, to call forth their most vigorous efforts, that poetry is admired and honored by their countrymen. With respect to the paucity of national traditions, it will be time to complain of it when all those of which we are possessed are exhausted. Besides, as I have already shown, it is the privilege of poets, when 25 30 35 40

14. *Spencer*—an error—possibly typographical—for Edmund Spenser (1552-1599). 16. *Ossian*—James Macpherson (1736?-1796) published in 1761 *Fingal*, and in 1763 *Temora*, which, together with some earlier *Fragments*, he alleged to be translations from ancient Gaelic poems by Ossian.

they suppose themselves in need of materials, to seek them in other countries. The best English poets have done this. The events of Spenser's celebrated poem take place within the shadowy limits of fairy-land. Shakespeare has laid the scene of many of his finest tragedies in foreign countries. Milton went  
 5 out of the world for the subject of his two epics. Byron has taken the incidents of all his poems from outside of England. Southey's best work is a poem of Spain—of chivalry, and of the Roman Church. For the story of one of his narrative poems, Moore went to Persia; for that of another, to the antediluvian world. Wordsworth and Crabbe, each in a different way, and each with great  
 10 power, abjuring all heroic traditions and recollections, and all aid from the supernatural and the marvellous, have drawn their subjects from modern manners and the simple occurrences of common life. Are they read, for that reason, with any the less avidity by the multitudes who resort to their pages for pastime, for edification, for solace, for noble joy, and for the ecstasies of  
 15 pure delight?

It has been urged by some, as an obstacle to the growth of elegant literature among us, that our language is a transplanted one, framed for a country and for institutions different from ours, and, therefore, not likely to be wielded by us with such force, effect, and grace, as it would have been if it had grown  
 20 up with our nation, and received its forms and its accessions from the exigencies of our experience. It seems to me that this is one of the most unsubstantial of all the brood of phantoms which have been conjured up to alarm us. Let those who press this opinion descend to particulars. Let them point out the peculiar defects of our language in its application to our natural and political  
 25 situation. Let them show in what respects it refuses to accommodate itself easily and gracefully to all the wants of expression that are felt among us. Till they do this, let us be satisfied that the copious and flexible dialect we speak is as equally proper to be used at the equator as at the poles, and at any intermediate latitude; and alike in monarchies or republics. It has grown  
 30 up, as every forcible and beautiful language has done, among a simple and unlettered people; it has accommodated itself, in the first place, to the things of nature, and, as civilization advanced, to the things of art; and thus it has become a language full of picturesque forms of expression, yet fitted for the purposes of science. If a new language were to arise among us in our present  
 35 condition of society, I fear that it would derive too many of its words from the roots used to signify canals, railroads, and steam-boats—things which, however well thought of at present, may perhaps a century hence be superseded by still more ingenious inventions. To try this notion about a transplanted dialect, imagine one of the great living poets of England emigrated to this  
 40 country. Can anybody be simple enough to suppose that his poetry would be the worse for it?

I infer, then, that all the materials of poetry exist in our own country, with

3. poem—*The Faerie Queene*. 5. two epics—*Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. 6. best work—*Roderic, the Last of the Goths* (1814), which narrates the struggles of the Christians in Spain against the Moors. 8. went to Persia—The reference is to Moore's long poem, *Lalla Rookh*; the other poem referred to is *The Loves of the Angels*. 9. Crabbe—George Crabbe (1754-1832), author of a series of realistic tales in verse. Both Wordsworth and Crabbe, however, employed the supernatural as a theme.

all the ordinary encouragements and opportunities for making a successful use of them. The elements of beauty and grandeur, intellectual greatness and moral truth, the stormy and the gentle passions, the casualties and the changes of life, and the light shed upon man's nature by the story of past times and the knowledge of foreign manners, have not made their sole abode in the old world beyond the waters. If under these circumstances our poetry should finally fail of rivalling that of Europe, it will be because Genius sits idle in the midst of its treasures. 5

# RALPH WALDO EMERSON

1803 - 1882

## I. IN SEARCH OF THE OVER-SOUL (1803-1836)

- 1803 Born May 25, the second son of the Rev. William Emerson and Ruth Haskins Emerson, in the parish house of the First (Unitarian) Church, Boston.
- 1811 May, Emerson's father died. The widow, aided by Aunt Mary Moody Emerson, amidst grinding poverty strove to educate five boys.
- 1813 Emerson entered the Boston Latin School. The family removed to the Ezra Ripley home in Concord in 1814.
- 1817 August, entered Harvard College as president's freshman (messenger), working his way through college, and not greatly touched by the curriculum.
- 1820 Began keeping his *Journals* (published 1909-14).
- 1821-1825 After graduating from Harvard, taught in a girls' school in Boston, at first under the direction of his brother William and afterwards alone.
- 1825 February, entered the Divinity School at Cambridge. Desultory studies interrupted by poor health.
- 1826 October 10, licensed to preach; November 25, left on a voyage to South Carolina and Florida for his health, returning June, 1827.
- 1828 Breakdown in health of his brother Edward Bliss Emerson (died in Puerto Rico, 1834).
- 1829 March, became colleague of the Rev. Henry Ware of the Second (Unitarian) Church, Boston. September 30, married Ellen Tucker (died February 8, 1831).
- 1832 Resigned his pulpit rather than adhere to the forms of the church, sailing for Europe December 25.
- 1833 In Europe until October 9, visiting Italy, France, and Great Britain, and making the acquaintance of Landor, Wordsworth, and, above all, Carlyle.
- 1834 Removed to Concord to live with his mother. Emerson continued to preach at intervals until 1847.
- 1835 Lectured in Boston, beginning a practice which was to last all of his effective life, and which carried him into all parts of the country. September 14, married Lydia (Lidian) Jackson, and bought the house in Concord which he made famous.
- 1836 September, *Nature* published anonymously in Boston. (Charles Emerson, his brother, died at New York, May 9.)

## II. THE TRANSCENDENTALIST (1836-1866)

- 1836 October 30, Waldo Emerson born (died January 27, 1842). The "Transcendental Club" formed, including in its membership George Ripley, F. H. Hedge, O. A. Brownson, James Freeman Clarke, W. H. Channing, Eliza-

- beth Peabody, Margaret Fuller, Theodore Parker, Bronson Alcott, and Emerson.
- 1837 August 31, delivered "The American Scholar" as the Phi Beta Kappa address at Harvard.
- 1838 July 15, delivered the "Divinity School Address" at Harvard, incurring the hostility of the orthodox.
- 1839 February 25, Ellen Emerson born.
- 1840-1844 The *Dial* published, Emerson serving as sole editor 1842-44.
- 1841 (The Brook Farm project launched.) *Essays* published, March. November 22, Edith Emerson born.
- 1844 *Essays; Second Series*, published.
- 1845 Emerson lectured on *Representative Men* (published 1850).
- 1846 *Poems* published (dated 1847). No other poems until *May Day and Other Poems* (1868).
- 1847 October 5, sailed on a lecture tour to England, visiting Paris in 1848, and returning in July, 1848.
- 1850-1861 Emerson preoccupied with national politics, vigorously defending the abolitionists, including John Brown.
- 1856 *English Traits* published.
- 1860 *The Conduct of Life* published.
- 1866 LL.D. from Harvard College.

### III. THE BEAUTIFUL SAGE (1866-1882)

- 1867 Delivered a second Phi Beta Kappa oration at Harvard. During this period Emerson became a regular attendant at the dinners of the Saturday Club, which included Longfellow, Hawthorne, Motley, Dana, Agassiz, Holmes, and Lowell among its members.
- 1870 Published *Society and Solitude*; and delivered *Natural History of the Intellect* as lectures at Harvard (published 1893).
- 1871 Evidences of declining intellectual powers. Trip to California.
- 1872 July, Emerson's house in Concord burned, and restored by friends during Emerson's absence in Europe, whither he sailed October 24, returning in 1873.
- 1874 *Parnassus*, an anthology of poetry, appeared as edited by Emerson.
- 1876 *Letters and Social Aims* appeared.
- 1882 April 27, Emerson died at Concord, Massachusetts.
- 1884 *Lectures and Biographical Sketches and Miscellanies* published.

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY AND EDITIONS:** There is an enormous literature about Emerson. For bibliography consult G. W. Cooke, *A Bibliography of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Houghton Mifflin, 1908, and the bibliography in *Literary History of the United States*, Vol. III, pp. 492-501.

*The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Houghton Mifflin, [1883]-93 (Riverside edition), 12 vols.; reprinted 1894 as Standard Library edition; Centenary edition, 1903-04, 12 vols.; reprinted as Concord edition, 1904; as Autograph Centenary edition, 1905. *Uncollected Writings*, Lamb Publishing Co., 1912. *Journals*, ed. by E. W. Emerson and W. E. Forbes, Houghton Mifflin, 1909-14, 10 vols. See also *The Heart of Emerson's Journals*, ed. by Bliss Perry, Houghton Mifflin, 1926. The best book of selections is F. I. Carpenter's in the American Writers Series (American Book Co., 1934). A useful reference book is G. S. Hubbel, *A Concordance to the Poems of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, H. W. Wilson, 1932. *Young Emerson Speaks: unpublished discourses on many subjects*, ed. A. C. McGiffert Jr., Houghton Mifflin, 1938.

The subtitle of a recent popular study of Emerson, "the enraptured Yankee," stresses the two aspects of his character of most importance for American cultural development. As a seer and a mystic, Emerson, the chief proponent of the transcendental philosophy, is in the line of mysticism which stretches from the original Puritan settlers of Massachusetts through Jonathan Edwards and Walt Whitman to our own day. Even when, as is frequently the case, the terms of the transcendental philosophy are not understood, most readers secure from Emerson flashes of sudden insight into spiritual meanings. The vocabulary of transcendentalism is a difficult one, and one not always consistent with itself; and, moreover, Emerson's habit of composition, whereby he sometimes sacrificed logical structure to pithy and brilliant statement, has further muddled the waters for the usual student. The looseness of structure in Emerson's essays has, however, been exaggerated; what he omits is the transition elements which would smooth the path of the reader from one aspect of his subject to another, but the logical structure is nevertheless there. Perhaps the best single key to his meaning is the sensible and simple comment of the little girl on "Brahma"—it just means, she said, God everywhere. It is the nearness of the divine to all the business of men that Emerson teaches. Emerson found support for this doctrine in many places—in Christian theology as understood by Unitarians, in Neo-Platonism, in German thought, in Carlyle, but these are problems for the special student. The beginner may well content himself with the attitude of the little girl.

But the American seer was incarnated in the American Yankee. Emerson's mysticism is not vague and cloudy, but applied to the practical issues of life as these presented themselves to a New Englander. He made many shrewd and sensible comments on the conditions of American civilization—its mediocrity, its mammon-worship, its tendency to mob psychology, its politics. His *Journals* are a mine of such information, but so are his essays. The meal in the firkin is as constant a fact to Emerson as the over-soul. Like Franklin, he never gets entirely away from the

immediate issue. *The American Scholar* presents a platform as pertinent to American life as the platform of a political party. In "The Poet" illustrations from the work of a carpenter and from Jakob Boehme lie close together, and the Oregon question is cheek by jowl with a reference to the Gospel according to St. John. It is this combination of practical good sense with the wisdom of the visionary that makes Emerson characteristic of his region and his time.

## WRITTEN AT ROME

Although "Written at Rome" was not published until after Emerson's death (it first appears in the *Poems* of 1884), it was actually written while Emerson was in Rome in 1833, and may be found in his *Journals*, Vol. III, under date of March 27, 1833. The punctuation of the poem as there printed differs in certain small particulars from that of the 1884 text here reproduced. The eccentric spelling "wooes" in line 14 is not found in the *Journals*. The two references to Scipio and Cato are sufficiently obvious.

Alone in Rome. Why, Rome is lonely too;—  
 Besides, you need not be alone; the soul  
 Shall have society of its own rank.  
 Be great, be true, and all the Scipios,  
 The Catos, the wise patriots of Rome,      5  
 Shall flock to you and tarry by your side,  
 And comfort you with their high company.  
 Virtue alone is sweet society,  
 It keeps the key to all heroic hearts,  
 And opens you a welcome in them all.      10  
 You must be like them if you desire them,  
 Scorn trifles and embrace a better aim  
 Than wine or sleep or praise;  
 Hunt knowledge as the lover wooes a maid,  
 And ever in the strife of your own thoughts  
 Obey the nobler impulse; that is Rome:      16  
 That shall command a senate to your side;  
 For there is no might in the universe  
 That can contend with love. It reigns forever.  
 Wait then, sad friend, wait in majestic peace  
 The hour of heaven. Generously trust      21  
 Thy fortune's web to the beneficent hand  
 That until now has put his world in fee  
 To thee. He watches for thee still. His love  
 Broods over thee, and as God lives in heaven,  
 However long thou walkest solitary,      26  
 The hour of heaven shall come, the man  
 appear.

## THE RHODORA:

ON BEING ASKED, WHENCE IS THE FLOWER?

This poem was written in 1834; first published in the *Western Messenger* for July, 1839; thence transferred to the *Poems* of 1847; and reprinted in the *Selected Poems* of 1876, the text of which is here followed. Of the 1876 volume it should be said that the revisions of texts therein contained were made in Emerson's own lifetime, and presumably with his consent, and that they therefore represent the latest revisions which have direct authority. Later changes made by his editors are not always happy.

In May, when sea-winds pierced our solitudes,  
 I found the fresh Rhodora in the woods,  
 Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook,  
 To please the desert and the sluggish brook.  
 The purple petals, fallen in the pool,      5  
 Made the black water with their beauty  
 gay;  
 Here might the red-bird come his plumes to  
 cool,  
 And court the flower that cheapens his array.  
 Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why  
 This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,  
 Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for  
 seeing,      11  
 Then Beauty is its own excuse for being:  
 Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!  
 I never thought to ask, I never knew;  
 But, in my simple ignorance, suppose      15  
 The self-same Power that brought me there  
 brought you.

## THE APOLOGY

This poem was apparently written in 1834 at Newton. It was published in the *Western*

*Messenger* in 1839, and thence collected into the *Poems* of 1847, the text of which is here reprinted.

Think me not unkind and rude  
That I walk alone in grove and glen;  
I go to the god of the wood  
To fetch his word to men.

Tax not my sloth that I  
Fold my arms beside the brook;  
Each cloud that floated in the sky  
Writes a letter in my book.

Chide me not, laborious band,  
For the idle flowers I brought;  
Every aster in my hand  
Goes home loaded with a thought.

There was never mystery  
But 'tis figured in the flowers;  
Was never secret history  
But birds tell it in the bowers.

One harvest from thy field  
Homeward brought the oxen strong;  
A second crop thine acres yield,  
Which I gather in a song.

### CONCORD FIGHT

HYMN SUNG AT THE COMPLETION OF THE  
BATTLE MONUMENT, APRIL 19, 1836

This poem, originally entitled "Concord Hymn," was given its present title in the *Selected Poems* of 1876. It was originally written to be sung at the celebration of the unveiling of the monument at the Concord battleground, an event which seems to have taken place July 4, 1837, instead of April 19, 1836, the anniversary of the date of the battle. There are some minor textual changes between the first version of the poem and the last which left Emerson's hands.

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,  
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,

Here once the embattled farmers stood,  
And fired the shot heard round the world.

The foe long since in silence slept;  
Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;  
And Time the ruined bridge has swept  
Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,  
We set to-day a votive stone;  
That memory may their deed redeem,  
When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit, that made those heroes dare  
To die, and leave their children free,  
Bid Time and Nature gently spare  
The shaft we raise to them and Thee.

### THE HUMBLE BEE

"The Humble Bee" was first published in the *Western Messenger*, February, 1839. It was then gathered into the 1847 *Poems*, and reappeared in the *Selected Poems* of 1876, the text of which is here followed. The student should compare the *Journals* for May 9, 1837. *Porto Rique* is, of course, Puerto Rico. The botanical references are to flora in the neighborhood of Emerson's home.

Burly, dozing humble bee,  
Where thou art is clime for me.  
Let them sail for Porto Rique,  
Far-off heats through seas to seek;  
I will follow thee alone,  
Thou animated torrid-zone!  
Zigzag steerer, desert cheerer,  
Let me chase thy waving lines:  
Keep me nearer, me thy hearer,  
Singing over shrubs and vines.

Insect lover of the sun  
Joy of thy dominion!  
Sailor of the atmosphere;  
Swimmer through the waves of air;  
Voyager of light and noon;  
Epicurean of June;

Wait, I prithee, till I come  
Within earshot of thy hum,—  
All without is martyrdom.

When the south-wind, in May days, 20  
With a net of shining haze  
Silvers the horizon wall,  
And with softness touching all,  
Tints the human countenance  
With a color of romance, 25  
And infusing subtle heats,  
Turns the sod to violets,  
Thou, in sunny solitudes,  
Rover of the underwoods,  
The green silence dost displace 30  
With thy mellow, breezy bass.

Hot midsummer's petted crone,  
Sweet to me thy drowsy tone  
Tells of countless sunny hours,  
Long days, and solid banks of flowers;  
Of gulfs of sweetness without bound 36  
In Indian wildernesses found;  
Of Syrian peace, immortal leisure,  
Firmest cheer, and bird-like pleasure.

Aught unsavory or unclean 40  
Hath my insect never seen;  
But violets and bilberry bells,  
Maple-sap and daffodils,  
Grass with green flag half-mast high,  
Succory to match the sky, 45  
Columbine with horn of honey,  
Scented fern, and agrimony,  
Clover, catchfly, adder's-tongue  
And brier-roses, dwelt among;  
All beside was unknown waste, 50  
All was picture as he passed.

Wiser far than human seer,  
Yellow-breeched philosopher!  
Seeing only what is fair,  
Sipping only what is sweet, 55  
Thou dost mock at fate and care,  
Leave the chaff, and take the wheat.  
When the fierce northwestern blast  
Cools sea and land so far and fast,  
Thou already slumberest deep; 60  
Woe and want thou canst outsleep;  
Want and woe, which torture us,  
Thy sleep makes ridiculous.

## EACH AND ALL

This poem first appeared in the *Western Messenger* for February, 1839, was collected into the 1847 *Poems*, and reappeared in the *Selected Poems*, the text of which is here followed. The germinal idea of the piece is found in the *Journals* for May 16, 1834. The reference to Napoleon's passage of the Alps seems to require no comment.

Little thinks, in the field, yon red-cloaked  
clown  
Of thee from the hill-top looking down;  
The heifer that lows in the upland farm,  
Far-heard, lows not thine ear to charm;  
The sexton, tolling his bell at noon, 5  
Deems not that great Napoleon  
Stops his horse, and lists with delight,  
Whilst his files sweep round yon Alpine  
height;  
Nor knowest thou what argument  
Thy life to thy neighbor's creed has lent. 10  
All are needed by each one;  
Nothing is fair or good alone.  
I thought the sparrow's note from heaven,  
Singing at dawn on the alder bough;  
I brought him home, in his nest, at even; 15  
He sings the song, but it cheers not now,  
For I did not bring home the river and sky;—  
He sang to my ear,—they sang to my eye.  
The delicate shells lay on the shore;  
The bubbles of the latest wave 20  
Fresh pearls to their enamel gave;  
And the bellowing of the savage sea  
Greeted their safe escape to me.  
I wiped away the weeds and foam, 50  
I fetched my sea-born treasures home; 25  
But the poor, unsightly, noisome things  
Had left their beauty on the shore,  
With the sun, and the sand, and the wild  
uproar.  
The lover watched his graceful maid,  
As mid the virgin train she strayed, 30  
Nor knew her beauty's best attire  
Was woven still by the snow-white choir.  
At last she came to his hermitage,  
Like the bird from the woodlands to the  
cage;—  
The gay enchantment was undone, 35

A gentle wife, but fairy none.  
 Then I said, "I covet truth;  
 Beauty is unripe childhood's cheat;  
 I leave it behind with the games of youth."—  
 As I spoke, beneath my feet 40  
 The ground-pine curled its pretty wreath,  
 Running over the club-moss burrs;  
 I inhaled the violet's breath;  
 Around me stood the oaks and firs;  
 Pine-cones and acorns lay on the ground; 45  
 Over me soared the eternal sky,  
 Full of light and of deity;  
 Again I saw, again I heard,  
 The rolling river, the morning bird;—  
 Beauty through my senses stole; 50  
 I yielded myself to the perfect whole.

### THE PROBLEM

This poem was published in the *Dial*, July, 1840, then in the 1847 *Poems*, and then in the *Selected Poems*, from which the present text is taken. Emerson dated the piece November 10, 1839. Consult the *Journals* for August 28, 1838.

I like a church; I like a cowl;  
 I love a prophet of the soul;  
 And on my heart monastic aisles  
 Fall like sweet strains, or pensive smiles;  
 Yet not for all his faith can see 5  
 Would I that cowed churchman be.

Why should the vest on him allure,  
 Which I could not on me endure?

Not from a vain or shallow thought  
 His awful Jove young Phidias brought, 10  
 Never from lips of cunning fell  
 The thrilling Delphic oracle;

Out from the heart of nature rolled  
 The burdens of the Bible old;  
 The litanies of nations came, 15  
 Like the volcano's tongue of flame,  
 Up from the burning core below,—  
 The canticles of love and woe;  
 The hand that rounded Peter's dome,  
 And groined the aisles of Christian Rome,  
 Wrought in a sad sincerity; 21  
 Himself from God he could not free;  
 He builded better than he knew;—  
 The conscious stone to beauty grew.

Know'st thou what wove yon woodbird's nest  
 Of leaves, and feathers from her breast? 26  
 Or how the fish outbuilt her shell,  
 Painting with morn each annual cell?  
 Or how the sacred pine-tree adds  
 To her old leaves new myriads? 30  
 Such and so grew these holy piles,  
 Whilst love and terror laid the tiles.  
 Earth proudly wears the Parthenon,  
 As the best gem upon her zone;  
 And Morning opes with haste her lids, 35  
 To gaze upon the Pyramids;  
 O'er England's abbeys bends the sky,  
 As on its friends, with kindred eye;  
 For, out of Thought's interior sphere,  
 These wonders rose to upper air; 40  
 And Nature gladly gave them place,  
 Adopted them into her race,  
 And granted them an equal date  
 With Andes and with Ararat.

These temples grew as grows the grass; 45  
 Art might obey, but not surpass.  
 The passive Master lent his hand  
 To the vast soul that o'er him planned;  
 And the same power that reared the shrine  
 Bestrode the tribes that knelt within. 50  
 Ever the fiery Pentecost

1. *cowl*—the hood of the garment of a priest. 6. *cowed*—a dissyllable, and so marked in the Concord edition. 10. *Jove* . . . *Phidias*—The reference is to the famous statue of Zeus at Athens, which has disappeared. Phidias was the most famous Greek sculptor. 12. *Delphic oracle*—the oracle of Apollo at Delphi, consulted by all of Greece in ancient times. 18. *canticles of love and woe*—that is, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, considered as the supreme literary expression of the Middle Ages. 19. *Peter's dome*—The dome of St. Peter's at Rome was completed by Michelangelo. 20. *groined*—The groin is the angular curve formed by the crossing of two arches in Gothic (or other) architecture. 27-28. *fish* . . . *cell*—Cf. Holmes's poem "The Chambered Nautilus." 33. *Parthenon*—The Parthenon at Athens, though in ruins, is usually considered the supreme achievement of ancient architecture. 44. *Andes* . . . *Ararat*—The Andes in the New World, and Mt. Ararat in Asia, cited as two examples of natural antiquity. 51. *Pentecost*—Cf. Acts 2.

Girds with one flame the countless host,  
 Trances the heart through chanting choirs,  
 And through the priest the mind inspires.  
 The word unto the prophet spoken 55  
 Was writ on tables yet unbroken;  
 The word by seers or sibyls told,  
 In groves of oak, or fanes of gold,  
 Still floats upon the morning wind,  
 Still whispers to the willing mind. 60  
 One accent of the Holy Ghost  
 The heedless world hath never lost.  
 I know what say the fathers wise,—  
 The Book itself before me lies,  
 Old Chrysostom, best Augustine, 65  
 And he who blent both in his line,  
 The younger *Golden Lips* or mines,  
 Taylor, the Shakspeare of divines.  
 His words are music in my ear,  
 I see his cowled portrait dear; 70  
 And yet, for all his faith could see,  
 I would not the good bishop be.

## WOODNOTES

"Woodnotes," one of the longest of Emerson's poems, is in two parts, of which only the first portion is here reprinted. No poem of his was more greatly modified in successive appearances. Part I, in its original form, first appeared in the *Dial* for October, 1840, and Part II, in the same magazine a year later. In revised form the poem was then gathered into the *Poems* of 1847. With still other changes in text, it was reprinted in the *Selected Poems* of 1876. But the form of the poem which appears in the *Poems* of 1884, after Emerson's death, is radically different from any of the foregoing; section 3, as here printed, for example, appears for the first time, and there are other important changes. Part II was also radically revised. Sections 2-4 as here printed immediately suggest Thoreau, especially the attributes given the "forest seer" in section 2; and though one

member of the Emerson family is said to have said that part of this description was written before Emerson knew Thoreau well, the applicability of the poem to the sage of Walden Pond seems irresistible. In its first form, the poem opened with a short passage lamenting the position of the poet in Emerson's own time. Emerson's sketch of Thoreau should be compared with "Woodnotes."

## I

## I

When the pine tosses its cones  
 To the song of its waterfall tones,  
 Who speeds to the woodland walks?  
 To birds and trees who talks?  
 Caesar of his leafy Rome, 5  
 There the poet is at home.  
 He goes to the river-side,—  
 Not hook nor line hath he;  
 He stands in the meadows wide,—  
 Nor gun nor scythe to see: 10  
 Sure some god his eye enchants:  
 What he knows nobody wants.  
 In the wood he travels glad,  
 Without better fortune had,  
 Melancholy without bad. 15  
 Knowledge this man prizes best  
 Seems fantastic to the rest:  
 Pondering shadows, colors, clouds,  
 Grass-buds, and caterpillar-shrouds,  
 Boughs on which the wild bees settle, 20  
 Tints that spot the violet's petal,  
 Why Nature loves the number five,  
 And why the star-form she repeats:  
 Lover of all things alive,  
 Wonderer at all he meets, 25  
 Wonderer chiefly at himself,  
 Who can tell him what he is?  
 Or how meet in human elf  
 Coming and past eternities?

## 2

And such I knew, a forest seer, 30  
 A minstrel of the natural year,

56. tables . . . unbroken—Cf. Ex. 32: 19. 65. Chrysostom—John of Antioch (347-407), known as Chrysostom or the Golden Mouth because of his eloquence. 65. Augustine—St. Augustine (354-430), whose *Confessions* Emerson much admired. 68. Taylor—Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667), English divine, author of *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying*. 70. cowled—again a dissyllable. 22. Nature . . . five—This refers to the doctrine known as quinarism, a fanciful classification of organic forms on the hypothesis that they dispose themselves in sets of five. It was largely advocated by William Swainson (1789-1855), British naturalist.

Foreteller of the vernal ides,  
 Wise harbinger of spheres and tides,  
 A lover true, who knew by heart  
 Each joy the mountain dales impart;  
 It seemed that Nature could not raise  
 A plant in any secret place,  
 In quaking bog, on snowy hill,  
 Beneath the grass that shades the rill,  
 Under the snow, between the rocks,  
 In damp fields known to bird and fox,  
 But he would come in the very hour  
 It opened in its virgin bower,  
 As if a sunbeam showed the place,  
 And tell its long-descended race.  
 It seems as if the breezes brought him;  
 It seemed as if the sparrows taught him;  
 As if by secret sight he knew  
 Where, in far fields, the orchis grew.  
 Many haps fall in the field  
 Seldom seen by wishful eyes,  
 But all her shows did Nature yield,  
 To please and win this pilgrim wise.  
 He saw the partridge drum in the woods;  
 He heard the woodcock's evening hymn;  
 He found the tawny thrushes' broods;  
 And the shy hawk did wait for him;  
 What others did at distance hear,  
 And guessed within the thicket's gloom,  
 Was shown to this philosopher,  
 And at his bidding seemed to come.

## 3

In unploughed Maine he sought the lum-  
 berers' gang  
 Where from a hundred lakes young rivers  
 sprang;  
 He trode the unplanted forest floor, whereon  
 The all-seeing sun for ages hath not shone;  
 Where feeds the moose, and walks the surly  
 bear,  
 And up the tall mast runs the woodpecker.  
 He saw beneath dim aisles, in odorous beds,  
 The slight Linnaea hang its twin-born heads,  
 And blessed the monument of the man of  
 flowers,  
 Which breathes his sweet fame through the  
 northern bowers.  
 He heard, when in the grove, at intervals,  
 With sudden roar the aged pine-tree falls,—

One crash, the death-hymn of the perfect tree,  
 Declares the close of its green century. 75  
 Low lies the plant to whose creation went  
 Sweet influence from every element;  
 Whose living towers the years conspired to  
 build,  
 Whose giddy top the morning loved to gild.  
 Through these green tents, by eldest Nature  
 dressed,  
 He roamed, content alike with man and  
 beast.  
 Where darkness found him he lay glad at  
 night;  
 There the red morning touched him with its  
 light.  
 Three moons his great heart him a hermit  
 made,  
 So long he roved at will the boundless shade.  
 The timid it concerns to ask their way,  
 And fear what foe in caves and swamps can  
 stray,  
 To make no step until the event is known,  
 And ills to come as evils past bemoan.  
 Not so the wise; no coward watch he keeps  
 To spy what danger on his pathway creeps;  
 Go where he will, the wise man is at home,  
 His hearth the earth,—his hall the azure  
 dome;  
 Where his clear spirit leads him, there's his  
 road  
 By God's own light illumined and fore-  
 showed.

## 4

'Twas one of the charmed days  
 When the genius of God doth flow,  
 The wind may alter twenty ways,  
 A tempest cannot blow;  
 It may blow north, it still is warm;  
 Or south, it still is clear;  
 Or east, it smells like a clover-farm;  
 Or west, no thunder fear.  
 The musing peasant lowly great  
 Beside the forest water sate;  
 The rope-like pine roots crosswise grown  
 Composed the net-work of his throne;  
 The wide lake, edged with sand and grass,  
 Was burnished to a floor of glass,  
 Painted with shadows green and proud  
 Of the tree and of the cloud.

67. tall mast—that is, the tall pine tree which will make a mast. 69. Linnaea—a slender flowering evergreen. Cf. note 35, p. 404.

He was the heart of all the scene;  
 On him the sun looked more serene;  
 To hill and cloud his face was known,—  
 It seemed the likeness of their own; 115  
 They knew by secret sympathy  
 The public child of earth and sky.  
 'You ask,' he said, 'what guide  
 Me through trackless thickets led,  
 Through thick-stemmed woodlands rough 120  
 and wide.  
 I found the water's bed.  
 The watercourses were my guide;  
 I travelled grateful by their side,  
 Or through their channel dry;  
 They led me through the thicket damp, 125  
 Through brake and fern, the beavers' camp,  
 Through beds of granite cut my road,  
 And their resistless friendship showed:  
 The falling waters led me,  
 The foodful waters fed me, 130  
 And brought me to the lowest land,  
 Unerring to the ocean sand.  
 The moss upon the forest bark  
 Was pole-star when the night was dark;  
 The purple berries in the wood 135  
 Supplied me necessary food;  
 For Nature ever faithful is  
 To such as trust her faithfulness.  
 When the forest shall mislead me,  
 When the night and morning lie, 140  
 When sea and land refuse to feed me,  
 'Twill be time enough to die;  
 Then will yet my mother yield  
 A pillow in her greenest field,  
 Nor the June flowers scorn to cover 145  
 The clay of their departed lover.'

### THE SPHINX

"The Sphinx" first appeared in the *Dial*, January, 1841; then in the *Poems*; and then in the *Selected Poems*. The present text is from the last of these. There are a few minor textual changes. The Concord edition quotes in connection with this poem the following passage from Emerson's notebooks (1859):

"I have often been asked the meaning of the 'Sphinx.' It is this,—The perception of identity unites all things and explains one by another, and the most rare and strange is equally facile as the most common. But if the mind live only in particulars, and see only differences (wanting the power to see the whole—all in each), then the world addresses to this mind a question it cannot answer, and each new fact tears it in pieces, and it is vanquished by the distracting variety." Emerson has in mind both the fable of Oedipus and the Sphinx, and the famous Egyptian Sphinx near the pyramids.

The Sphinx is drowsy,  
 Her wings are furled;  
 Her ear is heavy,  
 She broods on the world.  
 'Who'll tell me my secret, 5  
 The ages have kept?—  
 I awaited the seer,  
 While they slumbered and slept;—  
 'The fate of the man-child;  
 The meaning of man; 10  
 Known fruit of the Unknown;  
 Daedalian plan;  
 Out of sleeping a waking,  
 Out of waking a sleep;  
 Life death overtaking; 15  
 Deep underneath deep?  
 'Erect as a sunbeam,  
 Upspringeth the palm;  
 The elephant browses,  
 Undaunted and calm; 20  
 In beautiful motion  
 The thrush plies his wings;  
 Kind leaves of his covert  
 Your silence he sings.  
 'The waves, unashamed, 25  
 In difference sweet,  
 Play glad with the breezes,  
 Old playfellows meet;  
 The journeying atoms,  
 Primordial wholes, 30

12. **Daedalian**—complicated; from Daedalus, the famous artisan of mythology, who made the wings wherewith Icarus attempted to fly. 25. **unashamed**—four syllables, probably. 29. **atoms**—Emerson was fond of dwelling upon the principle of polarity in nature. The sense of this passage seems to be that the atoms are driven by an animating principle of polarity to their proper stations.



Firmly draw, firmly drive,  
By their animate poles.

'Sea, earth, air, sound, silence,  
Plant, quadruped, bird,  
By one music enchanted,  
One deity stirred,—  
Each the other adorning  
Accompany still;  
Night veileth the morning,  
The vapor the hill.

'The babe by its mother  
Lies bathed in joy;  
Glide its hours uncounted,—  
The sun is its toy;  
Shines the peace of all being,  
Without cloud, in its eyes;  
And the sum of the world  
In soft miniature lies.

'But man crouches and blushes,  
Absconds and conceals;  
He creepeth and peepeth,  
He palter and steals;  
Infirm, melancholy,  
Jealous glancing around,  
An oaf, an accomplice,  
He poisons the ground.

'Out spoke the great mother,  
Beholding his fear;—  
At the sound of her accents  
Cold shuddered the sphere:—  
"Who has drugged my boy's cup?  
Who has mixed my boy's bread?  
Who, with sadness and madness,  
Has turned my child's head?"

I heard a poet answer  
Aloud and cheerfully,  
'Say on, sweet Sphinx! thy dirges  
Are pleasant songs to me.  
Deep love lieth under  
These pictures of time;

They fade in the light of  
Their meaning sublime.

'The fiend that man harries  
Is love of the Best;  
35 Yawns the pit of the Dragon,  
Lit by rays from the Blest.  
The Lethe of Nature  
Can't trance him again,  
Whose soul sees the perfect,  
40 Which his eyes seek in vain. 80

'To vision profounder  
Man's spirit must dive;  
His aye-rolling orb  
At no goal will arrive;  
45 The heavens that now draw him 85  
With sweetness untold,  
Once found,—for new heavens  
He spurneth the old.

'Pride ruined the angels,  
50 Their shame them restores; 90  
And the joy that is sweetest  
Lurks in stings of remorse.  
Have I a lover  
Who is noble and free?—  
55 I would he were nobler 95  
Than to love me.

'Eterne alternation  
Now follows, now flies;  
And under pain, pleasure,—  
60 Under pleasure, pain lies. 100  
Love works at the centre,  
Heart-heaving away;  
Forth speed the strong pulses  
To the borders of day.

65 'Dull Sphinx, Jove keep thy five wits: 105  
Thy sight is growing blear;  
Rue, myrrh and cummin for the Sphinx,—  
Her muddy eyes to clear!—  
The old Sphinx bit her thick lip,—  
70 Said, 'Who taught thee me to name? 110

42. bathed—a dissyllable. 60. sphere—the earth conceived of as a sphere. 75. pit of the Dragon—Cf. Rev. 17: 8; 19: 20; 20: 1-3. 76. Blest—Cf. Rev. 21. 83. aye-rolling—ever rolling. 91-92. In the Concord edition these lines read:

"Lurks the joy that is sweetest  
In stings of remorse."

97. Eterne—Eternal. 107. Rue, myrrh . . . cummin—In the herbals these plants are supposed to have curative properties.

I am thy spirit, yoke-fellow,  
Of thine eye I am eyebeam.

'Thou art the unanswered question;  
Couldst see thy proper eye,  
Always it asketh, asketh;  
And each answer is a lie.  
So take thy quest through nature,  
It through thousand natures ply;  
Ask on, thou clothed eternity;  
Time is the false reply.'

Uprose the merry Sphinx,  
And crouched no more in stone;  
She melted into purple cloud,  
She silvered in the moon;  
She spired into a yellow flame;  
She flowered in blossoms red;  
She flowed into a foaming wave:  
She stood Monadnoc's head.

Thorough a thousand voices  
Spoke the universal dame:  
'Who telleth one of my meanings,  
Is master of all I am.'

Gauge of more and less through space,  
Electric star or pencil plays,  
The lonely Earth amid the balls  
That hurry through the eternal halls,  
A makeweight flying to the void,  
Supplemental asteroid,  
Or compensatory spark,  
Shoots across the neutral Dark.

## II

120 Man's the elm, and Wealth the vine;  
Stanch and strong the tendrils twine:  
Though the frail ringlets thee deceive,  
None from its stock that vine can reave.  
Fear not, then, thou child infirm,  
There's no god dare wrong a worm;  
125 Laurel crowns cleave to deserts,  
And power to him who power exerts.  
Hast not thy share? On winged feet,  
Lo! it rushes thee to meet;  
And all that Nature made thy own,  
25 Floating in air or pent in stone,  
Will rive the hills, and swim the sea,  
130 And, like thy shadow, follow thee.

## COMPENSATION

Emerson prefixed to each of his essays in the volume of 1841 a poetical motto of his own composition, as he did to the second series of 1844. These he later cumulated and published in the *May Day* volume of 1868 in the section of "Elements and Mottoes." "Compensation" and "Friendship" are two such poems from the 1841 volume. The ambiguous reference to "electric star or pencil" in line 8 may refer either to a pencil of light or to the telegraph considered as an electric pencil.

## I

The wings of Time are black and white,  
Pied with morning and with night.  
Mountain tall and ocean deep  
Trembling balance duly keep.  
In changing moon and tidal wave  
5 Glows the feud of Want and Have.

## FRIENDSHIP

A ruddy drop of manly blood  
The surging sea outweighs,  
The world uncertain comes and goes,  
The lover rooted stays.  
I fancied he was fled,—  
5 And, after many a year,  
Glowed unexhausted kindliness,  
Like daily sunrise there.  
My careful heart was free again,  
O friend, my bosom said,  
10 Through thee alone the sky is arched,  
Through thee the rose is red;  
All things through thee take nobler form,  
And look beyond the earth,  
The mill-round of our fate appears  
15 A sun-path in thy worth.  
Me too thy nobleness has taught  
To master my despair;  
The fountains of my hidden life  
5 Are through thy friendship fair.  
20

128. Monadnoc's—mountain in New Hampshire.

## THE SNOW-STORM

First published in the *Dial*, January, 1841, this poem appeared in the 1847 volume, and then in the *Selected Poems*, from which the text is taken. Cf. *Journals* for November 27, 1832.

Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,  
Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,  
Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air  
Hides hills and woods, the river, and the  
heaven,  
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.  
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's  
feet 6  
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates  
sit  
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed  
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

Come see the north wind's masonry. 10  
Out of an unseen quarry evermore  
Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer  
Curves his white bastions with projected roof  
Round every windward stake, or tree, or door.  
Speeding, the myriad-handed, his wild work  
So fanciful, so savage, nought cares he 16  
For number or proportion. Mockingly,  
On coop or kennel he hangs Parian wreaths;  
A swan-like form invests the hidden thorn;  
Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to wall,  
Maugre the farmer's sighs; and, at the gate,  
A tapering turret overtops the work: 22  
And when his hours are numbered, and the  
world  
Is all his own, retiring, as he were not,  
Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished Art  
To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,  
Built in an age, the mad wind's night-work,  
The frolic architecture of the snow. 28

## THINE EYES STILL SHINED

This poem, one of the few love poems by Emerson, addressed to the poet's wife, was apparently written about 1828, but was not

published until 1847. The present text is from the *Selected Poems*. The Concord edition, Vol. IX, p. 436, prints additional stanzas from manuscript, which Emerson did not apparently desire to appear with the rest.

Thine eyes still shined for me, though far  
I lonely roved the land or sea:  
As I behold yon evening star,  
Which yet beholds not me.

This morn I climbed the misty hill, 5  
And roamed the pastures through;  
How danced thy form before my path  
Amidst the deep-eyed dew!

When the redbird spread his sable wing,  
And showed his side of flame; 10  
When the rosebud ripened to the rose,  
In both I read thy name.

## THRENODY

"Threnody" first appeared in the 1847 volume. The text here followed is that of the *Selected Poems*. The occasion of the poem was, of course, the death of Waldo Emerson at the age of six on January 27, 1842. Emerson seems to have poured out his grief in the first portion of the poem soon after his child's death, but the portion beginning "The deep Heart answered, 'Weepest thou?'" was added much later when he was in a frame of mind to reason himself into reconciliation with his loss. It is a curious proof of Emerson's absorption in the boy that there is not so much as a single reference to the boy's mother in the poem.

The South-wind brings  
Life, sunshine and desire,  
And on every mount and meadow  
Breathes aromatic fire;  
But over the dead he has no power, 5  
The lost, the lost, he cannot restore;  
And, looking over the hills, I mourn  
The darling who shall not return.

18. Parian—Parian marble, much employed in ancient Greece, was noted for its dazzling whiteness.

I see my empty house,  
 I see my trees repair their boughs; 10  
 And he, the wondrous child,  
 Whose silver warble wild  
 Outvalued every pulsing sound  
 Within the air's cerulean round,—  
 The hyacinthine boy, for whom 15  
 Morn well might break and April bloom,—  
 The gracious boy, who did adorn  
 The world whereinto he was born,  
 And by his countenance repay  
 The favor of the loving Day,— 20  
 Has disappeared from the Day's eye;  
 Far and wide she cannot find him;  
 My hopes pursue, they cannot bind him.  
 Returned this day, the south-wind searches,  
 And finds young pines and budding birches;  
 But finds not the budding man; 26  
 Nature who lost, cannot remake him;  
 Fate let him fall, Fate can't retake him;  
 Nature, Fate, men, him seek in vain.  
 And whither now, my truant wise and  
 sweet, 30  
 O, whither tend thy feet?  
 I had the right, few days ago,  
 Thy steps to watch, thy place to know:  
 How have I forfeited the right?  
 Hast thou forgot me in a new delight? 35  
 I hearken for thy household cheer,  
 O eloquent child!  
 Whose voice, an equal messenger,  
 Conveyed thy meaning mild.  
 What though the pains and joys 40  
 Whereof it spoke were toys  
 Fitting his age and ken,  
 Yet fairest dames and bearded men,  
 Who heard the sweet request,  
 So gentle, wise and grave, 45  
 Bended with joy to his behest,  
 And let the world's affairs go by,  
 A while to share his cordial game,  
 Or mend his wicker wagon-frame,  
 Still plotting how their hungry ear 50  
 That winsome voice again might hear;  
 For his lips could well pronounce  
 Words that were persuasions.  
 Gentlest guardians marked serene  
 His early hope, his liberal mien; 55  
 Took counsel from his guiding eyes  
 To make this wisdom earthly wise.

Ah, vainly do these eyes recall  
 The school-march, each day's festival,  
 When every morn my bosom glowed 60  
 To watch the convoy on the road;  
 The babe in willow wagon closed,  
 With rolling eyes and face composed;  
 With children forward and behind,  
 Like Cupids studiously inclined; 65  
 And he the chieftain paced beside,  
 The centre of the troop allied,  
 With sunny face of sweet repose,  
 To guard the babe from fancied foes.  
 The little captain innocent 70  
 Took the eye with him as he went;  
 Each village senior paused to scan  
 And speak the lovely caravan.  
 From the window I look out  
 To mark thy beautiful parade, 75  
 Stately marching in cap and coat  
 To some tune by fairies played;—  
 A music heard by thee alone  
 To works as noble led thee on.  
 Now Love and Pride, alas! in vain, 80  
 Up and down their glances strain.  
 The painted sled stands where it stood;  
 The kennel by the corded wood;  
 His gathered sticks to stanch the wall  
 Of the snow-tower, when snow should 85  
 fall;  
 The ominous hole he dug in the sand,  
 And childhood's castles built or planned;  
 His daily haunts I well discern,—  
 The poultry-yard, the shed, the barn,—  
 And every inch of garden ground 90  
 Paced by the blessed feet around,  
 From the roadside to the brook  
 Whereinto he loved to look.  
 Step the meek fowls where erst they 45  
 ranged;  
 The wintry garden lies unchanged; 95  
 The brook into the stream runs on;  
 But the deep-eyed boy is gone.  
 On that shaded day,  
 Dark with more clouds than tempests are,  
 When thou didst yield thy innocent  
 breath 100  
 In birdlike heavings unto death,  
 Night came, and Nature had not thee;  
 I said, 'We are mates in misery.'  
 The morrow dawned with needless glow;

Each snowbird chirped, each fowl must  
 crow; 105  
 Each trampler started; but the feet  
 Of the most beautiful and sweet  
 Of human youth had left the hill  
 And garden,—they were bound and still[.]  
 There's not a sparrow or a wren, 110  
 There's not a blade of autumn grain,  
 Which the four seasons do not tend,  
 And tides of life and increase lend;  
 And every chick of every bird,  
 And weed and rock-moss is preferred. 115

O ostrich-like forgetfulness!  
 O loss of larger in the less!  
 Was there no star that could be sent,  
 No watcher in the firmament,  
 No angel from the countless host 120  
 That loiters round the crystal coast,  
 Could stoop to heal that only child,  
 Nature's sweet marvel undefiled,  
 And keep the blossom of the earth,  
 Which all her harvests were not worth? 125  
 Not mine,—I never called thee mine,  
 But Nature's heir,—if I repine,  
 And seeing rashly torn and moved  
 Not what I made, but what I loved,  
 Grow early old with grief that thou 130  
 Must to the wastes of Nature go,—  
 'Tis because a general hope  
 Was quenched, and all must doubt and  
 grope.  
 For flattering planets seemed to say  
 This child should ill of ages stay, 135  
 By wondrous tongue, and guided pen,  
 Bring the frown Muses back to men.  
 Perchance not he but Nature ailed,  
 The world and not the infant failed.  
 It was not ripe yet to sustain 140  
 A genius of so fine a strain,  
 Who gazed upon the sun and moon  
 As if he came unto his own,  
 And, pregnant with his grander thought,  
 Brought the old order into doubt. 145  
 His beauty once their beauty tried;  
 They could not feed him, and he died,  
 And wandered backward as in scorn,  
 To wait an aeon to be born.  
 Ill day which made this beauty waste, 150  
 Plight broken, this high face defaced!

Some went and came about the dead;  
 And some in books of solace read;  
 Some to their friends the tidings say;  
 Some went to write, some went to pray; 155  
 One tarried here, there hurried one;  
 But their heart abode with none.  
 Covetous death bereaved us all,  
 To aggrandize one funeral.  
 The eager fate which carried thee 160  
 Took the largest part of me:  
 For this losing is true dying;  
 This is lordly man's down-lying,  
 This his slow but sure reclining,  
 Star by star his world resigning. 165  
 O that child of paradise,  
 Boy who made dear his father's home,  
 In whose deep eyes  
 Men read the welfare of the times to come,  
 I am too much bereft. 170  
 The world dishonored thou hast left.  
 O truth's and nature's costly lie!  
 O trusted broken prophecy!  
 O richest fortune sourly crossed!  
 Born for the future, to the future lost! 175

The deep Heart answered, 'Weepst thou?  
 Worthier cause for passion wild  
 If I had not taken the child.  
 And deemest thou as those who pore,  
 With aged eyes, short way before,— 180  
 Think'st Beauty vanished from the coast  
 Of matter, and thy darling lost?  
 Taught he not thee—the man of eld,  
 Whose eyes within his eyes beheld  
 Heaven's numerous hierarchy span 185  
 The mystic gulf from God to man?  
 To be alone wilt thou begin  
 When worlds of lovers hem thee in?  
 To-morrow, when the masks shall fall  
 That dizen Nature's carnival, 190  
 The pure shall see by their own will,  
 Which overflowing Love shall fill,  
 'Tis not within the force of fate  
 The fate-conjoined to separate.  
 But thou, my votary, weepst thou? 195  
 I gave thee sight—where is it now?  
 I taught thy heart beyond the reach  
 Of ritual, bible, or of speech;  
 Wrote in thy mind's transparent table,  
 As far as the incommunicable; 200

176. deep Heart—Nature, conceived as a spiritual entity; the over-soul. 190. dizen—bedizen.

Taught thee each private sign to raise  
 Lit by the supersolar blaze.  
 Past utterance, and past belief,  
 And past the blasphemy of grief,  
 The mysteries of Nature's heart; 205  
 And though no Muse can these impart,  
 Throb thine with Nature's throbbing breast,  
 And all is clear from east to west.

'I came to thee as to a friend;  
 Dearest, to thee I did not send 210  
 Tutors, but a joyful eye,  
 Innocence that matched the sky,  
 Lovely locks, a form of wonder,  
 Laughter rich as woodland thunder,  
 That thou might'st entertain apart 215  
 The richest flowering of all art:  
 And, as the great all-loving Day  
 Through smallest chambers takes its way,  
 That thou might'st break thy daily bread  
 With prophet, savior and head; 220  
 That thou might'st cherish for thine own  
 The riches of sweet Mary's Son,  
 Boy-Rabbi, Israel's paragon.  
 And thoughtest thou such guest  
 Would in thy hall take up his rest? 225  
 Would rushing life forget her laws,  
 Fate's glowing revolution pause?  
 High omens ask diviner guess;  
 Not to be conned to tediousness  
 And know my higher gifts unbind 230  
 The zone that girds the incarnate mind.  
 When the scanty shores are full  
 With Thought's perilous, whirling pool;  
 When frail Nature can no more,  
 Then the Spirit strikes the hour: 235  
 My servant Death, with solving rite,  
 Pours finite into infinite.

'Wilt thou freeze love's tidal flow,  
 Whose streams through Nature circling go?  
 Nail the wild star to its track 240  
 On the half-climbed zodiac?  
 Light is light which radiates,  
 Blood is blood which circulates,  
 Life is life which generates,  
 And many-seeming life is one,— 245  
 Wilt thou transfix and make it none?  
 Its onward force too starkly pent  
 In figure, bone and lineament?

Wilt thou, uncalled, interrogate,  
 Talker! the unreplying Fate? 250  
 Nor see the genius of the whole  
 Ascendant in the private soul,  
 Beckon it when to go and come,  
 Self-announced its hour of doom?  
 Fair the soul's recess and shrine, 255  
 Magic-built to last a season;  
 Masterpiece of love benign,  
 Fairer that expansive reason  
 Whose omen 'tis, and sign.  
 Wilt thou not ope thy heart to know 260  
 What rainbows teach, and sunsets show?  
 Verdict which accumulates  
 From lengthening scroll of human fates,  
 Voice of earth to earth returned,  
 Prayers of saints that inly burned,— 265  
 Saying, *What is excellent,*  
*As God lives, is permanent;*  
*Hearts are dust, hearts' loves remain;*  
*Heart's love will meet thee again.*  
 Revere the Maker; fetch thine eye 270  
 Up to his style, and manners of the sky.  
 Not of adamant and gold  
 Built he heaven stark and cold;  
 No, but a nest of bending reeds,  
 Flowering grass, and scented weeds; 275  
 Or like a traveller's fleeing tent,  
 Or bow above the tempest bent;  
 Built of tears and sacred flames,  
 And virtue reaching to its aims;  
 Built of furtherance and pursuing, 280  
 Not of spent deeds, but of doing.  
 Silent rushes the swift Lord  
 Through ruined systems still restored,  
 Broadsowing, bleak and void to bless,  
 Plants with worlds the wilderness; 285  
 Waters with tears of ancient sorrow  
 Apples of Eden ripe to-morrow.  
 House and tenant go to ground,  
 Lost in God, in Godhead found.'

## ODE,

INSCRIBED TO W. H. CHANNING

This poem appeared first in the 1847 volume. The *Selected Poems* omits it, but it appeared in a "revised" edition of the *Poems*

202. *supersolar*—literally, beyond the sun; that is, in the world considered as spiritual symbolism. 222-23. Cf. Luke 2: 46-49.

in 1866, from which the text is taken. The Rev. William Henry Channing (1810-1884) was a nephew of William Ellery Channing, an abolitionist, and a Unitarian clergyman whose chief writing was a three-volume biography of his uncle.

Though loath to grieve  
The evil time's sole patriot,  
I cannot leave  
My honied thought  
For the priest's cant,  
Or statesman's rant.

If I refuse  
My study for their politique,  
Which at the best is trick,  
The angry Muse  
Puts confusion in my brain.

But who is he that prates  
Of the culture of mankind,  
Of better arts and life?  
Go, blindworm, go,  
Behold the famous States  
Harrying Mexico  
With rifle and with knife!

Or who, with accent bolder,  
Dare praise the freedom-loving mountaineer?  
I found by thee, O rushing Contoocook!  
And in thy valleys, Agiochook!  
The jackals of the negro-holder.

The God who made New Hampshire  
Taunted the lofty land  
With little men;—  
Small bat and wren  
House in the oak:—  
If earth-fire cleave  
The upheaved land, and bury the folk,  
The Southern crocodile would grieve.  
Virtue palters; Right is hence;  
Freedom praised, but hid;  
Funeral eloquence  
Rattles the coffin-lid.

What boots thy zeal,  
O glowing friend,  
That would indignant rend  
The Northland from the South?  
Wherefore? to what good end?  
Boston Bay and Bunker Hill  
Would serve things still;—  
Things are of the snake.

The horseman serves the horse,  
The neatherd serves the neat,  
The merchant serves the purse,  
The eater serves his meat;  
'Tis the day of the chattel,  
Web to weave, and corn to grind;  
Things are in the saddle,  
And ride mankind.

There are two laws discrete,  
Not reconciled,—  
Law for man, and law for thing;  
The last builds town and fleet,  
But it runs wild,  
And doth the man unking.

'Tis fit the forest fall,  
The steep be graded,  
The mountain tunnelled,  
The sand shaded,  
The orchard planted,  
The glebe tilled,  
The prairie granted,  
The steamer built.

Let man serve law for man;  
Live for friendship, live for love,  
For truth's and harmony's behoof;  
The state may follow how it can,  
As Olympus follows Jove.

Yet do not I implore  
The wrinkled shopman to my sounding  
woods,  
Nor bid the unwilling senator  
Ask votes of thrushes in the solitudes.  
Every one to his chosen work;—

17. **Mexico**—The Mexican War, fought 1846-48, was bitterly denounced in New England as a war for the extension of slavery. 21-22. **Contoocook** . . . **Agiochook**—The Contoocook River rises in New Hampshire and enters the Merrimac. **Agiochook**, "place of the spirit of the pines," is an Indian name for the White Mountains of New Hampshire (E. M. Haines, *The American Indian*, Mas-sin-ná-gan Co., 1888, p. 706). 45. **neat**—cattle. 70. **Jove**—Jupiter considered as the father and ruler of the gods.

Foolish hands may mix and mar;  
 Wise and sure the issues are.  
 Round they roll till dark is light,  
 Sex to sex, and even to odd;—  
 The over-god  
 Who marries Right to Might,  
 Who peoples, unpeoples,—  
 He who exterminates  
 Races by stronger races,  
 Black by white faces,—  
 Knows to bring honey  
 Out of the lion;  
 Grafts gentlest scion  
 On pirate and Turk.

The Cossack eats Poland,  
 Like stolen fruit;  
 Her last noble is ruined,  
 Her last poet mute:  
 Straight, into double band  
 The victors divide;  
 Half for freedom strike and stand;—  
 The astonished Muse finds thousands at her  
 side.

## ODE TO BEAUTY

This lyrical poem, in which Emerson rivals Poe in verbal music, was first published in the *Dial*, October, 1843, then in the *Poems* of 1847, and finally in the *Selected Poems* of 1876, from which the present text is taken. There are some small textual variations among these versions.

Who gave thee, O Beauty,  
 The keys of this breast,—  
 Too credulous lover  
 Of blest and unblest?  
 Say, when in lapsed ages  
 Thee knew I of old?  
 Or what was the service  
 For which I was sold?  
 When first my eyes saw thee,  
 I found me thy thrall,

By magical drawings,  
 Sweet tyrant of all!  
 I drank at thy fountain  
 False waters of thirst;  
 80 Thou intimate stranger,  
 Thou latest and first!  
 Thy dangerous glances  
 Make women of men;  
 New-born, we are melting  
 85 Into nature again.

Lavish, lavish promiser,  
 Nigh persuading gods to err!  
 Guest of million painted forms,  
 Which in turn thy glory warms!  
 90 The frailest leaf, the mossy bark,  
 The acorn's cup, the rain-drop's arc,  
 The swinging spider's silver line,  
 The ruby of the drop of wine,  
 The shining pebble of the pond,  
 95 Thou inscribest with a bond,  
 In thy momentary play,  
 Would bankrupt nature to repay.

Ah, what avails it  
 To hide or to shun  
 Whom the Infinite One  
 35 Hath granted his throne?  
 The heaven high over  
 Is the deep's lover;  
 The sun and sea,  
 Informed by thee,  
 40 Before me run  
 And draw me on,  
 Yet fly me still,  
 As Fate refuses  
 To me the heart Fate for me chooses.  
 45 Is it that my opulent soul  
 Was mingled from the generous whole;  
 Sea-valleys and the deep of skies  
 Furnished several supplies;  
 50 And the sands whereof I'm made  
 Draw me to them, self-betrayed?  
 I turn the proud portfolio  
 Which holds the grand designs  
 Of Salvator, of Guercino,  
 55 And Piranesi's lines.

86. honey—Cf. Judg. 14: 9. 90. Poland—After the failure of the Polish uprising of 1830-31, the Russian government instituted a harsh military despotism in Russian Poland. 54. Salvator—Salvator Rosa (1615?-1673), Neapolitan painter. Guercino—Giovanni Francesco Barbieri Guercino (1590-1606), Bolognese painter. 55. Piranesi's—Giambattista Piranesi (1720-1778), Italian engraver, whose pictures fascinated many of the romanticists.



I hear the lofty paeans  
 Of the masters of the shell,  
 Who heard the starry music  
 And recount the numbers well;  
 Olympian bards who sung  
 Divine Ideas below,  
 Which always find us young  
 And always keep us so.  
 Oft, in streets or humblest places,  
 I detect far-wandered graces,  
 Which, from Eden wide astray,  
 In lowly homes have lost their way.

Thee gliding through the sea of form,  
 Like the lightning through the storm,  
 Somewhat not to be possessed,  
 Somewhat not to be caressed,  
 No feet so fleet could ever find,  
 No perfect form could ever bind.  
 Thou eternal fugitive,  
 Hovering over all that live,  
 Quick and skilful to inspire  
 Sweet, extravagant desire,  
 Starry space and lily-bell  
 Filling with thy roseate smell,  
 Wilt not give the lips to taste  
 Of the nectar which thou hast.

All that's good and great with thee  
 Works in close conspiracy;  
 Thou hast bribed the dark and lonely  
 To report thy features only,  
 And the cold and purple morning  
 Itself with thoughts of thee adorning;  
 The leafy dell, the city mart,  
 Equal trophies of thine art;  
 E'en the flowing azure air  
 Thou hast touched for my despair;  
 And, if I languish into dreams,  
 Again I meet the ardent beams.  
 Queen of things! I dare not die  
 In Being's deeps past ear and eye;  
 Lest there I find the same deceiver  
 And be the sport of Fate forever.  
 Dread Power, but dear! if God thou be,  
 Unmake me quite, or give thyself to me!

## EXPERIENCE

60 "Experience," like "Character," was originally a verse motto prefixed to one of the *Essays: Second Series* (1844). They followed the fortunes of the "Compensation" poem, as noted above. The present text is from the 1876 volume.

65 The lords of life, the lords of life,—  
 I saw them pass  
 In their own guise,  
 Like and unlike,  
 Portly and grim,— 5  
 70 Use and Surprise,  
 Surface and Dream,  
 Succession swift and spectral Wrong,  
 Temperament without a tongue,  
 And the inventor of the game 10  
 75 Omnipresent without name;—  
 Some to see, some to be guessed,  
 They marched from east to west:  
 Little man, least of all,  
 Among the legs of his guardians tall, 15  
 80 Walked about with puzzled look.  
 Him by the hand dear Nature took,  
 Dearest Nature, strong and kind,  
 Whispered, 'Darling, never mind!  
 To-morrow they will wear another face, 20  
 85 The founder thou; these are thy race!'

## CHARACTER

90 The sun set, but set not his hope:  
 Stars rose; his faith was earlier up:  
 Fixed on the enormous galaxy,  
 Deeper and older seemed his eye;  
 And matched his sufferance sublime 5  
 95 The taciturnity of time.  
 He spoke, and words more soft than rain  
 Brought the Age of Gold again:  
 His action won such reverence sweet  
 As hid all measure of the feat. 10

57. masters of the shell—the poets, considered as orphic followers of Apollo, who first constructed a lyre from the shell of a turtle. Because of their divine inspiration, they are Olympian bards (line 60).

## URIEL

This poem was first published in the 1847 volume. The present text is from the *Selected Poems*. The title owes its existence to *Paradise Lost*, Book III, lines 620 ff., where Uriel, the angel whom St. John saw in the sun, first appears. Uriel is one of those angels who are God's eyes "That run through all the Heavens, or down to the Earth." There is no trace in Milton of any "sad self-knowledge" falling on the angel of the sun. In highly symbolic fashion, however, the present poem sets forth Emerson's spiritual crisis which resulted in his leaving his Boston pulpit.

It fell in the ancient periods

Which the brooding soul surveys,  
Or ever the wild Time coined itself  
Into calendar months and days.

This was the lapse of Uriel,  
Which in Paradise befell.  
Once, among the Pleiads walking,  
Sayd overheard the young gods talking;  
And this treason, too long pent,  
To his ears was evident.  
The young deities discussed  
Laws of form, and metre just,  
Orb, quintessence, and sunbeams,  
What subsisteth, and what seems.  
One, with low tones that decide,  
And doubt and reverend use defied,

With a look that solved the sphere,  
And stirred the devils everywhere,  
Gave his sentiment divine  
Against the being of a line.  
'Line in nature is not found;  
Unit and universe are round;  
In vain produced, all rays return;  
Evil will bless, and ice will burn.'  
As Uriel spoke with piercing eye,  
A shudder ran around the sky;  
The stern old war-gods shook their heads;  
The seraphs frowned from myrtle-beds;  
Seemed to the holy festival  
The rash word boded ill to all;  
The balance-beam of Fate was bent;  
The bounds of good and ill were rent;  
Strong Hades could not keep his own,  
But all slid to confusion.

A sad self-knowledge, withering, fell  
On the beauty of Uriel;  
In heaven once eminent, the god  
Withdrew, that hour, into his cloud;  
Whether doomed to long gyration  
In the sea of generation,  
Or by knowledge grown too bright  
To hit the nerve of feebler sight.  
Straightway, a forgetting wind  
Stole over the celestial kind,  
And their lips the secret kept,  
If in ashes the fire-seed slept.  
But now and then, truth-speaking things  
Shamed the angels' veiling wings;

5. **lapse**—fall. Emerson symbolizes his turning away from the mild orthodoxy of Unitarianism, in the fall of Uriel. The **Paradise** of the next line is, of course, heaven. 7. **Pleiads**—The Pleiads in Greek mythology were originally seven sisters, but Emerson here prefers to think of them as starry deities. The discussion by the young deities of such metaphysical problems as the laws of form, the nature of the boundaries of the ego, and so forth, may have been suggested by the famous passage in *Paradise Lost*, Bk. II, lines 557-65. 8. **Sayd**—the symbolic figure of the orphic poet often employed by Emerson. 17. **solved**—dissolved; that is, that dissolved the orthodox notions of good and evil. 20. **being of a line**—that is, the speaker cast doubt upon those rigid distinctions between good and evil, between personal identity and the soul of the universe, and so on, which are essential to theology. 22. **Unit and universe**—Here is the doctrine of the transmigration, or at any rate the transfusion, of souls, as set forth in the prose essays. Man comes from the over-soul, and to the over-soul he returns. 24. **Evil will bless**—That which is evil in one aspect of its existence may prove beneficial in another and later aspect. 27. **old war-gods**—apparently a veiled reference to the sterner aspects of theology, such as Calvinism. 31. **beam of Fate**—In Greek mythology Zeus is represented as hanging the balance of Fate in the sky (the zodiacal "sign" of the Scales). 33. **Hades**—in Greek mythology, the god of the underworld. Note the seventeenth-century forced rhyme. 39-40. **Whether doomed**—that is, doomed in the circle of transmigration of souls, to reappear after a long lapse of time, in another incarnation. The passage may owe something to the second part of *Faust*. 43. **forgetting wind**—the rest of the poem expresses the doctrine of the secret quality of real knowledge common among the romantics.

And, shrilling from the solar course,  
 Or from fruit of chemic force, 50  
 Procession of a soul in matter,  
 Or the speeding change of water,  
 Or out of the good of evil born,  
 Came Uriel's voice of cherub scorn,  
 And a blush tinged the upper sky, 55  
 And the gods shook, they knew not why.

## H A M A T R E Y A

This poem first appeared in the 1847 volume. The text here is from the *Selected Poems*. The poem is based upon a passage in the *Vishnu Purana*, Book IV; the Concord edition suggests that the title is a variant of Maitreya: See Concord edition, Vol. IX, pp. 416-17.

Bulkeley, Hunt, Willard, Hosmer, Meriam,  
 Flint,  
 Possessed the land which rendered to their  
 toil  
 Hay, corn, roots, hemp, flax, apples, wool and  
 wood.  
 Each of these landlords walked amidst his  
 farm,  
 Saying "'Tis mine, my children's and my  
 name's: 5  
 How sweet the west-wind sounds in my own  
 trees!  
 How graceful climb those shadows on my  
 hill!  
 I fancy these pure waters and the flags  
 Know me, as does my dog: we sympathize;  
 And, I affirm, my actions smack of the  
 soil.' 10  
 Where are these men? Asleep beneath their  
 grounds;  
 And strangers, fond as they, their furrows  
 plough.  
 Earth laughs in flowers, to see her boastful  
 boys  
 Earth-proud, proud of the earth which is not  
 theirs;  
 Who steer the plough, but cannot steer their  
 feet 15

Clear of the grave.  
 They added ridge to valley, brook to pond,  
 And sighed for all that bounded their  
 domain;  
 'This suits me for a pasture; that's my park;  
 We must have clay, lime, gravel, granite-  
 ledge, 20  
 And misty lowland, where to go for peat.  
 The land is well,—lies fairly to the south.  
 'Tis good, when you have crossed the sea and  
 back,  
 To find the sitfast acres where you left them.'  
 Ah! the hot owner sees not Death, who  
 adds 25  
 Him to his land, a lump of mould the more.  
 Hear what the Earth says:—

## EARTH-SONG

Mine and yours;  
 Mine, not yours.  
 Earth endures; 30  
 Stars abide—  
 Shine down in the old sea;  
 Old are the shores;  
 But where are old men?  
 I who have seen much 35  
 Such have I never seen.  
  
 The lawyer's deed  
 Ran sure,  
 In tail,  
 To them, and to their heirs 40  
 Who shall succeed,  
 Without fail,  
 Forevermore.  
  
 Here is the land,  
 Shaggy with wood, 45  
 With its old valley,  
 Mound and flood.  
 But the heritors?  
 Fled like the flood's foam,—  
 The lawyer, and the laws, 50  
 And the kingdom,  
 Clean swept herefrom.  
  
 They called me theirs,  
 Who so controlled me;

51. Procession—issuing forth. 1. Bulkeley . . . Flint—names of the first settlers of Concord. 8. flags—water flags. 39. In tail—Land is entailed when it runs in succession through a determined line of heirs, as eldest sons.

Yet every one  
Wished to stay, and is gone,  
How am I theirs,  
If they cannot hold me,  
But I hold them?

55 If the red slayer think he slays,  
Or if the slain think he is slain,  
They know not well the subtle ways  
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

When I heard the Earth-song,  
I was no longer brave;  
My avarice cooled  
Like lust in the chill of the grave.

60 Far or forgot to me is near;  
Shadow and sunlight are the same;  
The vanished gods to me appear;  
And one to me are shame and fame.

## DAYS

"Days" was first published in the first issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, November, 1857. The present text is from the *Selected Poems*.

Daughters of Time, the hypocritic Days,  
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,  
And marching single in an endless file,  
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.  
To each they offer gifts after his will, 5  
Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds  
them all.

I, in my pleachéd garden, watched the pomp,  
Forgot my morning wishes, hastily  
Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day  
Turned and departed silent. I, too late, 10  
Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.

They reckon ill who leave me out;  
When me they fly, I am the wings; 10  
I am the doubter and the doubt,  
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,  
And pine in vain the sacred Seven;  
But thou, meek lover of the good! 15  
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

## ODE

Sung in the Town Hall, Concord, July 4,  
1857

The first formal publication of this poem was in *May Day and Other Poems*, 1867, though the occasion of the piece was a break fast in the Town Hall at Concord on the date stipulated, to raise money for the improvement of a new cemetery. The text is from the 1884 *Poems*.

## BRAHMA

This, in its day the most famous, or at any rate the most notorious, of Emerson's poems, was published in the *Atlantic Monthly* for November, 1857. The present text is from the *Selected Poems*. See, for the origins of the poem, Concord edition, Vol. IX, pp. 464-67, and *American Literature* for November, 1929, pp. 234 ff. Emerson divined the best explanation of "Brahma" for ordinary puzzled readers when he said to his daughter: "If you tell them to say Jehovah instead of Brahma, they will not feel any perplexity."

O tenderly the haughty day  
Fills his blue urn with fire;  
One morn is in the mighty heaven,  
And one in our desire.

The cannon booms from town to town, 5  
Our pulses beat not less,  
The joy-bells chime their tidings down,  
Which children's voices bless.

For He that flung the broad blue fold  
O'er-mantling land and sea, 10  
One third part of the sky unrolled  
For the banner of the free.

1. *hypocritic*—here, deceptive. 7. *pleachéd*—that is, with the boughs of the trees interlaced; or, more simply, intertwined, complicated. 12. *Brahmin*—here conceived of as the Hindu priest. 14. *Seven*—the seven highest saints of Brahminic belief.

The men are ripe of Saxon kind To build an equal state,— To take the statute from the mind And make of duty fate.	15	The god of bounds, Who sets to seas a shore, Came to me in his fatal rounds, And said: 'No more! No farther shoot Thy broad ambitious branches, and thy root, Fancy departs: no more invent, Contract thy firmament To compass of a tent. There's not enough for this and that, Make thy option which of two; Economize the failing river, Nor the less revere the Giver, Leave the many and hold the few. Timely wise accept the terms, Soften the fall with wary foot; A little while Still plan and smile, And, fault of novel germs, Mature the unfallen fruit. Curse, if thou wilt, thy sires, Bad husbands of their fires, Who, when they gave thee breath, Failed to bequeath The needful sinew stark as once, The Baresark marrow to thy bones, But left a legacy of ebbing veins, Inconstant heat and nerveless reins,— Amid the Muses, left thee deaf and dumb, Amid the gladiators, halt and numb.'	5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40
United States! the ages plead,— Present and Past in under-song,— Go put your creed into your deed, Nor speak with double tongue.	20		
For sea and land don't understand, Nor skies without a frown See rights for which the one hand fights By the other cloven down.			
Be just at home; then write your scroll Of honor o'er the sea, And bid the broad Atlantic roll, A ferry of the free.	25		20
And henceforth there shall be no chain, Save underneath the sea The wires shall murmur through the main Sweet songs of liberty.	30		25
The conscious stars accord above, The waters wild below, And under, through the cable wove, Her fiery errands go.	35		30
For He that worketh high and wise, Nor pauses in his plan, Will take the sun out of the skies Ere freedom out of man.	40		35

### TERMINUS

This poem first appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, January, 1867; it was then collected into the *May Day* volume; and reappeared in the *Selected Poems*, from which the text is taken. Terminus was the Roman god of boundaries.

It is time to be old,  
To take in sail:—

As the bird trims her to the gale,  
I trim myself to the storm of time,  
I man the rudder, reef the sail,  
Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime:  
'Lowly faithful, banish fear,  
Right onward drive unharmed;  
The port well worth the cruise, is near,  
And every wave is charmed.'

### SACRIFICE

This gnomic quatrain first appeared in the *May Day* volume. The present text is that of 1884. According to the Concord edition, the last two lines are from a Puritan sermon

13. *Saxon kind*—A strong consciousness of the "Anglo-Saxon" tradition in New England and America is characteristic of Emerson. 31. *wires*—transatlantic cables. 28. *Baresark*—Berserk; another veiled reference to the Germanic ("Anglo-Saxon") tradition of which Emerson was conscious.

preached before the House of Commons, November 30, 1642, by Caleb Vines.

Though love repine and reason chafe,  
There came a voice without reply,—  
'Tis man's perdition to be safe,  
When for the truth he ought to die.'

For I had too much to think,  
Heaven and earth to eat and drink.  
Is he hapless who can spare  
In his plenty things so rare?

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## MAIA

WRITTEN IN A VOLUME  
OF GOETHE

From the Concord edition, 1904. Maia is the Hindu principle of illusion.

From the *Poems* of 1884. Probably written about 1840.

Six thankful weeks,—and let it be  
A meter of prosperity,—  
In my coat I bore this book,  
And seldom therein could I look,

Illusion works impenetrable,  
Weaving webs innumerable,  
Her gay pictures never fail,  
Crowds each on other, veil on veil,  
Charmer who will be believed  
By man who thirsts to be deceived.

;

## NATURE

The publication of *Nature* in 1836—a little book of less than one hundred pages without Emerson's name on the title-page—begins an epoch in American literature, even though years went by before the first edition of five hundred copies was exhausted. In style and substance it marked the beginning of a literature which was national and not derivative or colonial. The text here reprinted, however, is that of the edition of 1849. There are a few minor variations in the text; and the verse motto here prefixed replaces the prose motto of 1836 from Plotinus.

A subtle chain of countless rings  
The next unto the farthest brings;  
The eye reads omens where it goes,  
And speaks all languages the rose;  
And, striving to be man, the worm  
Mounts through all the spires\* of form.

## INTRODUCTION

OUR AGE is retrospective. It builds the sepulchres of the fathers. It writes biographies, histories, and criticism. The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we, through their eyes. Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs? Embosomed for a season in nature, whose floods of life stream around and through us, and invite us by the powers they supply, to action proportioned to nature, why should we grope among the

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\* spires—spirals.

dry bones of the past, or put the living generation into masquerade out of its faded wardrobe? The sun shines to-day also. There is more wool and flax in the fields. There are new lands, new men, new thoughts. Let us demand our own works and laws and worship.

- 5 Undoubtedly we have no questions to ask which are unanswerable. We must trust the perfection of the creation so far, as to believe that whatever curiosity the order of things has awakened in our minds, the order of things can satisfy. Every man's condition is a solution in hieroglyphic to those inquiries he would put. He acts it as life, before he apprehends it as truth. In like manner, nature  
10 is already, in its forms and tendencies, describing its own design. Let us interrogate the great apparition that shines so peacefully around us. Let us inquire, to what end is nature?

- All science has one aim, namely, to find a theory of nature. We have theories of races and of functions, but scarcely yet a remote approach to an idea of creation.  
15 We are now so far from the road to truth, that religious teachers dispute and hate each other, and speculative men are esteemed unsound and frivolous. But to a sound judgment, the most abstract truth is the most practical. Whenever a true theory appears, it will be its own evidence. Its test is, that it will explain all phenomena. Now many are thought not only unexplained but in-  
20 explicable; as language, sleep, madness, dreams, beasts, sex.

- Philosophically considered, the universe is composed of Nature and the Soul. Strictly speaking, therefore, all that is separate from us, all which Philosophy distinguishes as the NOT ME, that is, both nature and art, all other men and my own body, must be ranked under this name, NATURE. In enumerating the values  
25 of nature and casting up their sum, I shall use the word in both senses;—in its common and in its philosophical import. In inquiries so general as our present one, the inaccuracy is not material; no confusion of thought will occur. *Nature*, in the common sense, refers to essences unchanged by man; space, the air, the river, the leaf. *Art* is applied to the mixture of his will with the same things,  
30 as in a house, a canal, a statue, a picture. But his operations taken together are so insignificant, a little chipping, baking, patching, and washing, that in an impression so grand as that of the world on the human mind, they do not vary the result.

## CHAPTER I

- 35 To go into solitude, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society. I am not solitary whilst I read and write, though nobody is with me. But if a man would be alone, let him look at the stars. The rays that come from those heavenly worlds will separate between him and what he touches. One might think the atmosphere was made transparent with this design, to give  
40 man, in the heavenly bodies, the perpetual presence of the sublime. Seen in the streets of cities, how great they are! If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore; and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown! But every night come out these envoys of beauty, and light the universe with their  
45 admonishing smile.

The stars awaken a certain reverence, because though always present, they are inaccessible; but all natural objects make a kindred impression, when the mind is open to their influence. Nature never wears a mean appearance. Neither does the wisest man extort her secret, and lose his curiosity by finding out all her perfection. Nature never became a toy to a wise spirit. The flowers, the animals, the mountains, reflected the wisdom of his best hour, as much as they had delighted the simplicity of his childhood.

When we speak of nature in this manner, we have a distinct but most poetical sense in the mind. We mean the integrity of impression made by manifold natural objects. It is this which distinguishes the stick of timber of the wood-cutter, from the tree of the poet. The charming landscape which I saw this morning is indubitably made up of some twenty or thirty farms. Miller owns this field, Locke that, and Manning the woodland beyond. But none of them owns the landscape. There is a property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts, that is, the poet. This is the best part of these men's farms, yet to this their warranty-deeds give no title.

To speak truly, few adult persons can see nature. Most persons do not see the sun. At least they have a very superficial seeing. The sun illuminates only the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and the heart of the child. The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood. His intercourse with heaven and earth becomes part of his daily food. In the presence of nature, a wild delight runs through the man, in spite of real sorrows. Nature says,—he is my creature, and maugre all his impertinent griefs, he shall be glad with me. Not the sun or the summer alone, but every hour and season yields its tribute of delight; for every hour and change corresponds to and authorizes a different state of the mind, from breathless noon to grimmest midnight. Nature is a setting that fits equally well a comic or a mourning piece. In good health, the air is a cordial of incredible virtue. Crossing a bare common, in snow puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky, without having in my thoughts any occurrence of special good fortune, I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration. I am glad to the brink of fear. In the woods too, a man casts off his years, as the snake his slough, and at what period soever of life, is always a child. In the woods, is perpetual youth. Within these plantations of God, a decorum and sanctity reign, a perennial festival is dressed, and the guest sees not how he should tire of them in a thousand years. In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life,—no disgrace, no calamity (leaving me my eyes,) which nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground,—my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space,—all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God. The name of the nearest friend sounds then foreign and accidental: to be brothers, to be acquaintances,—master or servant, is then a trifle and a disturbance. I am the lover of uncontained and immortal beauty. In the wilderness, I find something more dear and connate than in streets or

24. *maugre*—in spite of. 33. *slough*—outer skin. 42. *particle*—The collected (Concord) edition of the *Works* prints "parcel." 45. *connate*—congenial.



villages. In the tranquil landscape, and especially in the distant line of the horizon, man beholds somewhat as beautiful as his own nature.

The greatest delight which the fields and woods minister, is the suggestion of an occult relation between man and the vegetable. I am not alone and un-  
 5 acknowledged. They nod to me, and I to them. The waving of the boughs in the storm is new to me and old. It takes me by surprise, and yet is not unknown. Its effect is like that of a higher thought or a better emotion coming over me, when I deemed I was thinking justly or doing right.

Yet it is certain that the power to produce this delight, does not reside in  
 10 nature, but in man, or in a harmony of both. It is necessary to use these pleasures with great temperance. For, nature is not always tricked in holiday attire, but the same scene which yesterday breathed perfume and glittered as for the frolic of the nymphs, is overspread with melancholy to-day. Nature always wears the colors of the spirit. To a man laboring under calamity, the heat of his own fire  
 15 hath sadness in it. Then, there is a kind of contempt of the landscape felt by him who has just lost by death a dear friend. The sky is less grand as it shuts down over less worth in the population.

## CHAPTER II

### COMMODITY

20 Whoever considers the final cause of the world will discern a multitude of uses that enter as parts into that result. They all admit of being thrown into one of the following classes: Commodity; Beauty; Language; and Discipline.

Under the general name of Commodity, I rank all those advantages which our senses owe to nature. This, of course, is a benefit which is temporary and  
 25 mediate, not ultimate, like its service to the soul. Yet although low, it is perfect in its kind, and is the only use of nature which all men apprehend. The misery of man appears like childish petulance, when we explore the steady and prodigal provision that has been made for his support and delight on this green ball which floats him through the heavens. What angels invented these splendid  
 30 ornaments, these rich conveniences, this ocean of air above, this ocean of water beneath, this firmament of earth between? this zodiac of lights, this tent of dropping clouds, this striped coat of climates, this fourfold year? Beasts, fire, water, stones, and corn serve him. The field is at once his floor, his work-yard, his play-ground, his garden, and his bed.

35 "More servants wait on man  
 Than he'll take notice of."——

Nature, in its ministry to man, is not only the material, but is also the process and the result. All the parts incessantly work into each other's hands for the profit of man. The wind sows the seed; the sun evaporates the sea; the wind  
 40 blows the vapor to the field; the ice, on the other side of the planet, condenses

19. **Commodity**—used in the eighteenth-century sense of convenience to man's physical existence. 31. **zodiac**—the belt within which the planets move. 35-36. "**More . . . of**"—from the poem by George Herbert which Emerson quotes on p. 421.

rain on this; the rain feeds the plant; the plant feeds the animal; and thus the endless circulations of the divine charity nourish man.

The useful arts are reproductions or new combinations by the wit of man, of the same natural benefactors. He no longer waits for favoring gales, but by means of steam, he realizes the fable of Aeolus's bag, and carries the two and thirty winds in the boiler of his boat. To diminish friction, he paves the road with iron bars, and, mounting a coach with a ship-load of men, animals, and merchandise behind him, he darts through the country, from town to town, like an eagle or a swallow through the air. By the aggregate of these aids, how is the face of the world changed, from the era of Noah to that of Napoleon! The private poor man hath cities, ships, canals, bridges, built for him. He goes to the post-office, and the human race run on his errands; to the book-shop, and the human race read and write of all that happens, for him; to the court-house, and nations repair his wrongs. He sets his house upon the road, and the human race go forth every morning, and shovel out the snow, and cut a path for him.

But there is no need of specifying particulars in this class of uses. The catalogue is endless, and the examples so obvious, that I shall leave them to the reader's reflection, with the general remark, that this mercenary benefit is one which has respect to a farther good. A man is fed, not that he may be fed, but that he may work.

### CHAPTER III

#### BEAUTY

A nobler want of man is served by nature, namely, the love of Beauty.

The ancient Greeks called the world *κόσμος*, beauty. Such is the constitution of all things, or such the plastic power of the human eye, that the primary forms, as the sky, the mountain, the tree, the animal, give us a delight *in and for themselves*; a pleasure arising from outline, color, motion, and grouping. This seems partly owing to the eye itself. The eye is the best of artists. By the mutual action of its structure and of the laws of light, perspective is produced, which integrates every mass of objects, of what character soever, into a well colored and shaded globe, so that where the particular objects are mean and unaffecting, the landscape which they compose is round and symmetrical. And as the eye is the best composer, so light is the first of painters. There is no object so foul that intense light will not make beautiful. And the stimulus it affords to the sense, and a sort of infinitude which it hath, like space and time, make all matter gay. Even the corpse has its own beauty. But besides this general grace diffused over nature, almost all the individual forms are agreeable to the eye, as is proved by our endless imitations of some of them, as the acorn, the grape, the pine-cone, the wheat-ear, the egg, the wings and forms of

5. *steam*—Until the *Sirius* and *Great Western* crossed the Atlantic entirely under their own power in 1838, the steamboat relied upon auxiliary sails; hence, Emerson's picturesque figure of "two and thirty winds in the boiler." 5. *Aeolus's bag*—Aeolus, in Greek mythology, kept the winds in a bag. Cf. the opening of the *Aeneid*. 7. *iron bars*—Until a little before the publication of *Nature*, rails in America had been of wood faced on top with iron; these were known as strap rails. 25. *κόσμος*—*kosmos*, which has the meanings of adornment and order.

most birds, the lion's claw, the serpent, the butterfly, sea-shells, flames, clouds, buds, leaves, and the forms of many trees, as the palm.

For better consideration, we may distribute the aspects of Beauty in a three-fold manner.

- 5 1. First, the simple perception of natural forms is a delight. The influence of the forms and actions in nature, is so needful to man, that, in its lowest functions, it seems to lie on the confines of commodity and beauty. To the body and mind which have been cramped by noxious work or company, nature is medicinal and restores their tone. The tradesman, the attorney comes out of  
10 the din and craft of the street, and sees the sky and the woods, and is a man again. In their eternal calm, he finds himself. The health of the eye seems to demand a horizon. We are never tired, so long as we can see far enough.

- But in other hours, Nature satisfies by its loveliness, and without any mixture of corporeal benefit. I see the spectacle of morning from the hill-top over against  
15 my house, from day-break to sun-rise, with emotions which an angel might share. The long slender bars of cloud float like fishes in the sea of crimson light. From the earth, as a shore, I look out into that silent sea. I seem to partake its rapid transformations: the active enchantment reaches my dust, and I dilate and conspire with the morning wind. How does Nature deify us with a few  
20 and cheap elements! Give me health and a day, and I will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous. The dawn is my Assyria; the sun-set and moon-rise my Paphos, and unimaginable realms of faerie; broad noon shall be my England of the senses and the understanding; the night shall be my Germany of mystic philosophy and dreams.

- 25 Not less excellent, except for our less susceptibility in the afternoon, was the charm, last evening, of a January sunset. The western clouds divided and subdivided themselves into pink flakes modulated with tints of unspeakable softness; and the air had so much life and sweetness, that it was a pain to come within doors. What was it that nature would say? Was there no meaning in  
30 the live repose of the valley behind the mill, and which Homer or Shakespeare could not re-form for me in words? The leafless trees become spires of flame in the sunset, with the blue east for their back-ground, and the stars of the dead calices of flowers, and every withered stem and stubble rimed with frost, contribute something to the mute music.

- 35 The inhabitants of cities suppose that the country landscape is pleasant only half the year. I please myself with the graces of the winter scenery, and believe that we are as much touched by it as by the genial influences of summer. To the attentive eye, each moment of the year has its own beauty, and in the same field, it beholds, every hour, a picture which was never seen before, and  
40 which shall never be seen again. The heavens change every moment, and reflect their glory or gloom on the plains beneath. The state of the crop in the surrounding farms alters the expression of the earth from week to week. The

21. **Assyria**—here used vaguely for Oriental splendor. 22. **Paphos**—in classical times, a city of Cyprus noted for its Aphrodite cult. 22-23. **England . . . Germany**—In 1836 the regnant philosophical system in England was the "common-sense" philosophy of the Scotch school, based upon sensationalistic psychology; Germany, however, the home of transcendental idealism, was in the opinion of younger thinkers the true haunt of mystic wisdom. 33. **calices**—plural of calyx, the cup of a flower.

succession of native plants in the pastures and roadsides, which makes the silent clock by which time tells the summer hours, will make even the divisions of the day sensible to a keen observer. The tribes of birds and insects, like the plants punctual to their time, follow each other, and the year has room for all. By watercourses, the variety is greater. In July, the blue pontederia or pickerel-weed blooms in large beds in the shallow parts of our pleasant river, and swarms with yellow butterflies in continual motion. Art cannot rival this pomp of purple and gold. Indeed the river is a perpetual gala, and boasts each month a new ornament.

But this beauty of Nature which is seen and felt as beauty, is the least part. The shows of day, the dewy morning, the rainbow, mountains, orchards in blossom, stars, moonlight, shadows in still water, and the like, if too eagerly hunted, become shows merely, and mock us with their unreality. Go out of the house to see the moon, and 'tis mere tinsel; it will not please as when its light shines upon your necessary journey. The beauty that shimmers in the yellow afternoons of October, who ever could clutch it? Go forth to find it, and it is gone; 'tis only a mirage as you look from the windows of a diligence.

2. The presence of a higher, namely, of the spiritual element is essential to its perfection. The high and divine beauty which can be loved without effeminacy, is that which is found in combination with the human will. Beauty is the mark God sets upon virtue. Every natural action is graceful. Every heroic act is also decent, and causes the place and the bystanders to shine. We are taught by great actions that the universe is the property of every individual in it. Every rational creature has all nature for his dowry and estate. It is his, if he will. He may divest himself of it; he may creep into a corner, and abdicate his kingdom, as most men do, but he is entitled to the world by his constitution. In proportion to the energy of his thought and will, he takes up the world into himself. "All those things for which men plough, build, or sail, obey virtue," said Sallust. "The winds and waves," said Gibbon, "are always on the side of the ablest navigators." So are the sun and moon and all the stars of heaven. When a noble act is done,—perchance in a scene of great natural beauty; when Leonidas and his three hundred martyrs consume one day in dying, and the sun and moon come each and look at them once in the steep defile of Thermopylæ; when Arnold Winkelried, in the high Alps, under the shadow of the avalanche, gathers in his side a sheaf of Austrian spears to break the line for his comrades; are not these heroes entitled to add the beauty of the scene to the beauty of the deed? When the bark of Columbus nears the shore of America;—before it, the beach lined with savages, fleeing out of all their huts of cane; the sea behind; and the purple mountains of the Indian Archipelago

6. our . . . river—the Concord River. 8. gala—festivity. 28-29. "All . . . Sallust—From *The Conspiracy of Catiline*, Chap. II, by Caius Sallustius Crispus, Roman historian (86-34 B.C.). 29-30. "The winds . . . navigators"—From Chapter LXVIII of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* by Edward Gibbon (1737-1794). 32. Leonidas—Leonidas, King of Sparta, defended the pass of Thermopylæ, with a small army, of which 300 Spartans were the heart, against the Persian army of 2,000,000 men, in the fifth century B.C. All of the Spartans were killed, save one. 34. Winkelried—According to tradition, at the battle of Sempach (1386) Arnold von Winkelried, seeing the Swiss hesitate before the invading Austrian pikemen, rushed forward, gathered all the Austrian spears he could to his breast, and so made an opening in the enemy ranks.

around, can we separate the man from the living picture? Does not the New World clothe his form with her palm-groves and savannahs as fit drapery? Ever does natural beauty steal in like air, and envelope great actions. When Sir Harry Vane was dragged up the Tower-hill, sitting on a sled, to suffer  
 5 death, as the champion of the English laws, one of the multitude cried out to him, "You never sate on so glorious a seat." Charles II., to intimidate the citizens of London, caused the patriot Lord Russel to be drawn in an open coach, through the principal streets of the city, on his way to the scaffold. "But," his  
 10 biographer says, "the multitude imagined they saw liberty and virtue sitting by his side." In private places, among sordid objects, an act of truth or heroism seems at once to draw to itself the sky as its temple, the sun as its candle. Nature stretcheth out her arms to embrace man, only let his thoughts be of equal greatness. Willingly does she follow his steps with the rose and the violet, and bend  
 15 her lines of grandeur and grace to the decoration of her darling child. Only let his thoughts be of equal scope, and the frame will suit the picture. A virtuous man is in unison with her works, and makes the central figure of the visible sphere. Homer, Pindar, Socrates, Phocion, associate themselves fitly in our memory with the geography and climate of Greece. The visible heavens and earth sympathize with Jesus. And in common life whosoever has seen a person  
 20 of powerful character and happy genius, will have remarked how easily he took all things along with him,—the persons, the opinions, and the day, and nature became ancillary to a man.

3. There is still another aspect under which the beauty of the world may be viewed, namely, as it becomes an object of the intellect. Beside the relation of  
 25 things to virtue, they have a relation to thought. The intellect searches out the absolute order of things as they stand in the mind of God, and without the colors of affection. The intellectual and the active powers seem to succeed each other, and the exclusive activity of the one, generates the exclusive activity of the other. There is something unfriendly in each to the other, but they are like  
 30 the alternate periods of feeding and working in animals; each prepares and will be followed by the other. Therefore does beauty, which, in relation to actions, as we have seen, comes unsought, and comes because it is unsought, remain for the apprehension and pursuit of the intellect; and then again, in its turn, of the active power. Nothing divine dies. All good is eternally reproductive.  
 35 The beauty of nature re-forms itself in the mind, and not for barren contemplation, but for new creation.

All men are in some degree impressed by the face of the world; some men even to delight. This love of beauty is Taste. Others have the same love in such excess, that, not content with admiring, they seek to embody it in new  
 40 forms. The creation of beauty is Art.

4. **Vane**—Sir Henry Vane (1613-1662), statesman and author, executed at the instigation of Charles II for treason. Emerson probably read the long quotations from Sikes's life in James Mackintosh, *Lives of Eminent British Statesmen*, Vol. IV, pp. 234-35. 7. **Lord Russel**—William, Lord Russel (1639-1683), English statesman, executed for treason, though he insisted he was merely acting within his parliamentary rights. 8-9. **his biographer**—What biographer Emerson has in mind is not clear. 17. **Homer . . . Phocion**—Homer, the supposed author of the Iliad; Pindar, lyric Greek poet of heroic quality (522-443 B.C.); Socrates (470?-399 B.C.); Phocion (402-318 B.C.), Athenian statesman and general.

The production of a work of art throws a light upon the mystery of humanity. A work of art is an abstract or epitome of the world. It is the result or expression of nature, in miniature. For, although the works of nature are innumerable and all different, the result or the expression of them all is similar and single. Nature is a sea of forms radically alike and even unique. A leaf, a sun-beam, a landscape, the ocean, make an analogous impression on the mind. What is common to them all,—that perfectness and harmony, is beauty. The standard of beauty is the entire circuit of natural forms,—the totality of nature; which the Italians expressed by defining beauty “*il piu nell’ uno*.” Nothing is quite beautiful alone: nothing but is beautiful in the whole. A single object is only so far beautiful as it suggests this universal grace. The poet, the painter, the sculptor, the musician, the architect, seek each to concentrate this radiance of the world on one point, and each in his several work to satisfy the love of beauty which stimulates him to produce. Thus is Art, a nature passed through the alembic of man. Thus in art, does nature work through the will of a man filled with the beauty of her first works.

The world thus exists to the soul to satisfy the desire of beauty. This element I call an ultimate end. No reason can be asked or given why the soul seeks beauty. Beauty, in its largest and profoundest sense, is one expression for the universe. God is the all-fair. Truth, and goodness, and beauty, are but different faces of the same All. But beauty in nature is not ultimate. It is the herald of inward and eternal beauty, and is not alone a solid and satisfactory good. It must stand as a part, and not as yet the last or highest expression of the final cause of Nature.

## CHAPTER IV

25

## LANGUAGE

Language is a third use which Nature subserves to man. Nature is the vehicle of thought, and in a simple, double, and threefold degree.

1. Words are signs of natural facts.
2. Particular natural facts are symbols of particular spiritual facts.
3. Nature is the symbol of spirit.

30

1. Words are signs of natural facts. The use of natural history is to give us aid in supernatural history: the use of the outer creation, to give us language for the beings and changes of the inward creation. Every word which is used to express a moral or intellectual fact, if traced to its root, is found to be borrowed from some material appearance. *Right* means *straight*; *wrong* means *twisted*. *Spirit* primarily means *wind*; *transgression*, the crossing of a *line*; *supercilious*, the *raising of the eyebrow*. We say the *heart* to express emotion, the *head* to denote thought; and *thought* and *emotion* are words borrowed

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9. “*il piu nell’ uno*”—many in one. 15. *alembic*—distilling apparatus. 36. *Right*—The point lies in the etymology of the words: “right,” from O. E. *riht*; “wrong,” from O. E. *wrang*, *wringan*; “spirit,” from Latin *spiritus*, *spirare* (to breathe); “transgression,” from Latin *trans* (across) plus *gradi* (*gressus*), to step; “supercilious,” from Latin *super* (above) plus *cilium* (eyelid), whence Latin *superciliosus*, “with raised eyebrows.” 39. *thought* . . . *emotion*—The etymology which Emerson assumes for “thought” is not clear. “Emotion” comes from the Latin *emotum*, that which is shaken or stirred up.

from sensible things, and now appropriated to spiritual nature. Most of the process by which this transformation is made, is hidden from us in the remote time when language was framed; but the same tendency may be daily observed in children. Children and savages use only nouns or names of things, which they convert into verbs, and apply to analogous mental acts.

2. But this origin of all words that convey a spiritual import,—so conspicuous a fact in the history of language,—is our least debt to nature. It is not words only that are emblematic; it is things which are emblematic. Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact. Every appearance in nature corresponds to some state of the mind, and that state of the mind can only be described by presenting that natural appearance as its picture. An enraged man is a lion, a cunning man is a fox, a firm man is a rock, a learned man is a torch. A lamb is innocence; a snake is subtle spite; flowers express to us the delicate affections. Light and darkness are our familiar expression for knowledge and ignorance; and heat for love. Visible distance behind and before us, is respectively our image of memory and hope.

Who looks upon a river in a meditative hour and is not reminded of the flux of all things? Throw a stone into the stream, and the circles that propagate themselves are the beautiful type of all influence. Man is conscious of a universal soul within or behind his individual life, wherein, as in a firmament, the natures of Justice, Truth, Love, Freedom, arise and shine. This universal soul, he calls Reason: it is not mine, or thine, or his, but we are its; we are its property and men. And the blue sky in which the private earth is buried, the sky with its eternal calm, and full of everlasting orbs, is the type of Reason. That which, intellectually considered, we call Reason, considered in relation to nature, we call Spirit. Spirit is the Creator. Spirit hath life in itself. And man in all ages and countries, embodies it in his language, as the FATHER.

It is easily seen that there is nothing lucky or capricious in these analogies, but that they are constant, and pervade nature. These are not the dreams of a few poets, here and there, but man is an analogist, and studies relations in all objects. He is placed in the centre of beings, and a ray of relation passes from every other being to him. And neither can man be understood without these objects, nor these objects without man. All the facts in natural history taken by themselves, have no value, but are barren, like a single sex. But marry it to human history, and it is full of life. Whole Floras, all Linnaeus' and Buffon's volumes, are dry catalogues of facts; but the most trivial of these facts, the habit of a plant, the organs, or work, or noise of an insect, applied to the illustration of a fact in intellectual philosophy, or, in any way associated to human nature, affects us in the most lively and agreeable manner. The seed of a plant,—to what affecting analogies in the nature of man, is that little fruit made use of,

**22. Reason**—This is the reason, or pure thought, of transcendental philosophy, commonly opposed to the understanding, or common sense. The student should carefully note Emerson's use of Reason in this and other essays. Note especially that Reason, seen from the point of view of nature, is Spirit (lines 25-26). **35. Floras**—the world of plants systematically described. **35. Linnaeus** . . . **Buffon**—Karl von Linné, Swedish botanist (1707-1778), usually referred to by his Latinized name of Linnaeus, the founder of the modern systematization of genera and species in botany. Georges Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707-1788), French naturalist, whose *Natural History* was the first great popular synthesis of the subject.

in all discourse, up to the voice of Paul, who calls the human corpse a seed,—  
 “It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.” The motion of the  
 earth round its axis, and round the sun, makes the day, and the year. These are  
 certain amounts of brute light and heat. But is there no intent of an analogy  
 between man’s life and the seasons? And do the seasons gain no grandeur or  
 pathos from that analogy? The instincts of the ant are very unimportant, con-  
 sidered as the ant’s; but the moment a ray of relation is seen to extend from it  
 to man, and the little drudge is seen to be a monitor, a little body with a mighty  
 heart, then all its habits, even that said to be recently observed, that it never  
 sleeps, become sublime.

Because of this radical correspondence between visible things and human  
 thoughts, savages, who have only what is necessary, converse in figures. As we  
 go back in history, language becomes more picturesque, until its infancy, when  
 it is all poetry; or all spiritual facts are represented by natural symbols. The  
 same symbols are found to make the original elements of all languages. It has  
 moreover been observed, that the idioms of all languages approach each other in  
 passages of the greatest eloquence and power. And as this is the first language,  
 so is it the last. This immediate dependence of language upon nature, this con-  
 version of an outward phenomenon into a type of somewhat in human life,  
 never loses its power to affect us. It is this which gives that piquancy to the  
 conversation of a strong-natured farmer or back-woodsman, which all men  
 relish.

A man’s power to connect his thought with its proper symbol, and so to  
 utter it, depends on the simplicity of his character, that is, upon his love of  
 truth, and his desire to communicate it without loss. The corruption of man  
 is followed by the corruption of language. When simplicity of character and  
 the sovereignty of ideas is broken up by the prevalence of secondary desires,  
 the desire of riches, of pleasure, of power, and of praise,—and duplicity and  
 falsehood take place of simplicity and truth, the power over nature as an in-  
 terpreter of the will, is in a degree lost; new imagery ceases to be created, and  
 old words are perverted to stand for things which are not; a paper currency is  
 employed, when there is no bullion in the vaults. In due time, the fraud is  
 manifest, and words lose all power to stimulate the understanding or the affec-  
 tions. Hundreds of writers may be found in every long-civilized nation, who  
 for a short time believe, and make others believe, that they see and utter truths,  
 who do not of themselves clothe one thought in its natural garment, but who  
 feed unconsciously on the language created by the primary writers of the coun-  
 try, those, namely, who hold primarily on nature.

But wise men pierce this rotten diction and fasten words again to visible  
 things; so that picturesque language is at once a commanding certificate that  
 he who employs it, is a man in alliance with truth and God. The moment our  
 discourse rises above the ground line of familiar facts, and is inflamed with  
 passion or exalted by thought, it clothes itself in images. A man conversing in  
 earnest, if he watch his intellectual processes, will find that a material image,  
 more or less luminous, arises in his mind, cotemporaneous with every thought,

2. “It is sown . . .”—*Cf.* I Cor. 15: 44. 11. radical—fundamental. 13. picturesque—  
 This is the favorite romantic doctrine of the poetic origins of language.



which furnishes the vestment of the thought. Hence, good writing and brilliant discourse are perpetual allegories. This imagery is spontaneous. It is the blending of experience with the present action of the mind. It is proper creation. It is the working of the Original Cause through the instruments he has already

5 made.

These facts may suggest the advantage which the country-life possesses for a powerful mind, over the artificial and curtailed life of cities. We know more from nature than we can at will communicate. Its light flows into the mind evermore, and we forget its presence. The poet, the orator, bred in the woods, whose senses have been nourished by their fair and appeasing changes, year after year, without design and without heed,—shall not lose their lesson altogether, in the roar of cities or the broil of politics. Long hereafter, amidst agitation and terror in national councils,—in the hour of revolution,—these solemn images shall reappear in their morning lustre, as fit symbols and words of the thoughts which the passing events shall awaken. At the call of a noble sentiment, again the woods wave, the pines murmur, the river rolls and shines, and the cattle low upon the mountains, as he saw and heard them in his infancy. And with these forms, the spells of persuasion, the keys of power are put into his hands.

3. We are thus assisted by natural objects in the expression of particular meanings. But how great a language to convey such pepper-corn informations! Did it need such noble races of creatures, this profusion of forms, this host of orbs in heaven, to furnish man with the dictionary and grammar of his municipal speech? Whilst we use this grand cipher to expedite the affairs of our pot and kettle, we feel that we have not yet put it to its use, neither are able. We are like travellers using the cinders of a volcano to roast their eggs. Whilst we see that it always stands ready to clothe what we would say, we cannot avoid the question whether the characters are not significant of themselves. Have mountains, and waves, and skies, no significance but what we consciously give them, when we employ them as emblems of our thoughts? The world is emblematic. Parts of speech are metaphors, because the whole of nature is a metaphor of the human mind. The laws of moral nature answer to those of matter as face to face in a glass. "The visible world and the relation of its parts, is the dial plate of the invisible." The axioms of physics translate the laws of ethics. Thus, "the whole is greater than its part;" "reaction is equal to action;" "the smallest weight may be made to lift the greatest, the difference of weight being compensated by time;" and many the like propositions, which have an ethical as well as physical sense. These propositions have a much more extensive and universal sense when applied to human life, than when confined to technical use.

In like manner, the memorable words of history, and the proverbs of nations, consist usually of a natural fact, selected as a picture or parable of a moral truth. Thus; A rolling stone gathers no moss; A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; A cripple in the right way, will beat a racer in the wrong; Make hay while the sun shines; 'Tis hard to carry a full cup even; Vinegar is the son of wine; The last ounce broke the camel's back; Long-lived trees make

roots first;—and the like. In their primary sense these are trivial facts, but we repeat them for the value of their analogical import. What is true of proverbs, is true of all fables, parables, and allegories.

This relation between the mind and matter is not fancied by some poet, but stands in the will of God, and so is free to be known by all men. It appears to men, or it does not appear. When in fortunate hours we ponder this miracle, the wise man doubts, if, at all other times, he is not blind and deaf;

———“Can these things be,  
And overcome us like a summer’s cloud,  
Without our special wonder?”

for the universe becomes transparent, and the light of higher laws than its own, shines through it. It is the standing problem which has exercised the wonder and the study of every fine genius since the world began; from the era of the Egyptians and the Brahmins to that of Pythagoras, of Plato, of Bacon, of Leibnitz, of Swedenborg. There sits the Sphinx at the road-side, and from age to age, as each prophet comes by, he tries his fortune at reading her riddle. There seems to be a necessity in spirit to manifest itself in material forms; and day and night, river and storm, beast and bird, acid and alkali, preëxist in necessary Ideas in the mind of God, and are what they are by virtue of preceding affections in the world of spirit. A Fact is the end or last issue of spirit. The visible creation is the terminus or the circumference of the invisible world. “Material objects,” said a French philosopher, “are necessarily kinds of *scoriae* of the substantial thoughts of the Creator, which must always preserve an exact relation to their first origin; in other words, visible nature must have a spiritual and moral side.”

This doctrine is abstruse, and though the images of “garment,” “scoriae,” “mirror,” &c., may stimulate the fancy, we must summon the aid of subtler and more vital expositors to make it plain. “Every scripture is to be interpreted by the same spirit which gave it forth,”—is the fundamental law of criticism. A life in harmony with nature, the love of truth and of virtue, will purge the eyes to understand her text. By degrees we may come to know the primitive sense of the permanent objects of nature, so that the world shall be to us an open book, and every form significant of its hidden life and final cause.

A new interest surprises us, whilst, under the view now suggested, we con-

8. “Can these things be . . .”—From *Macbeth*, Act III, scene 4. 14. **Egyptians . . . Brahmins**—Ancient Egypt and ancient India were regarded by many writers in the romantic movement as possessed of a secret, mystical wisdom. 14. **Pythagoras . . . Plato**—Pythagoras, a Greek philosopher of the sixth century B.C., taught the immortality and the transmigration of souls. Plato (428-348 B.C.) is mentioned here because of his philosophical idealism. 14-15. **Bacon . . . Leibnitz . . . Swedenborg**—Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam (1561-1626), whose insistence on the inductive method in science does not conceal a mystical view of truth; Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz (1646-1716), philosophical optimist; Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), Swedish philosopher and mystic, whose doctrines profoundly interested Emerson. 15. **Sphinx**—By way of punishing King Laius of Thebes the Sphinx established herself by the side of the road leading to that city and destroyed all who could not answer her riddle until Oedipus finally solved it. 18. **pre-exist**—This passage should be compared with that on Reason, *ante*, p. 404. 21-22. “**Material objects**”—As Emerson’s *Journals*, Vol. III, pp. 512 ff., reveal, this passage comes from *The True Messiah* of Guillaume Caspar Lencroy Oegger, professor of philosophy and vicar of Notre Dame which Emerson probably read in a manuscript translation. 22. **scoriae**—dregs.

template the fearful extent and multitude of objects; since "every object rightly seen, unlocks a new faculty of the soul." That which was unconscious truth, becomes, when interpreted and defined in an object, a part of the domain of knowledge,—a new weapon in the magazine of power.

## 5

## CHAPTER V

## DISCIPLINE

In view of the significance of nature, we arrive at once at a new fact, that nature is a discipline. This use of the world includes the preceding uses, as parts of itself.

- 10 Space, time, society, labor, climate, food, locomotion, the animals, the mechanical forces, give us sincerest lessons, day by day, whose meaning is unlimited. They educate both the Understanding and the Reason. Every property of matter is a school for the understanding;—its solidity or resistance, its inertia, its extension, its figure, its divisibility. The understanding adds, divides, com-  
15 bines, measures, and finds nutriment and room for its activity in this worthy scene. Meantime, Reason transfers all these lessons into its own world of thought, by perceiving the analogy that marries Matter and Mind.

1. Nature is a discipline of the understanding in intellectual truths. Our dealing with sensible objects is a constant exercise in the necessary lessons of  
20 difference, of likeness, of order, of being and seeming, of progressive arrangement; of ascent from particular to general; of combination to one end of manifold forces. Proportioned to the importance of the organ to be formed, is the extreme care with which its tuition is provided,—a care pretermitted in no single case. What tedious training, day after day, year after year, never ending,  
25 to form the common sense; what continual reproduction of annoyances, inconveniences, dilemmas; what rejoicing over us of little men; what disputing of prices, what reckonings of interest,—and all to form the Hand of the mind;—to instruct us that "good thoughts are no better than good dreams, unless they be executed!"

- 30 The same good office is performed by Property and its filial systems of debt and credit. Debt, grinding debt, whose iron face the widow, the orphan, and the sons of genius fear and hate;—debt, which consumes so much time, which so cripples and disheartens a great spirit with cares that seem so base, is a preceptor whose lessons cannot be forgone, and is needed most by those who  
35 suffer from it most. Moreover, property, which has been well compared to snow,—“if it fall level to-day, it will be blown into drifts to-morrow,”—is the surface action of internal machinery, like the index on the face of a clock. Whilst now it is the gymnastics of the understanding, it is hiving, in the foresight of the spirit, experience in profounder laws.

- 40 The whole character and fortune of the individual are affected by the least inequalities in the culture of the understanding; for example, in the perception

12. **Understanding . . . Reason**—Here again is the contrast in transcendentalism between the ordinary common-sense logic which gets us through the daily work, and the higher intellectual faculty by which we apprehend nonsensory truths.

of differences. Therefore is Space, and therefore Time, that man may know that things are not huddled and lumped, but sundered and individual. A bell and a plough have each their use, and neither can do the office of the other. Water is good to drink, coal to burn, wool to wear; but wool cannot be drunk, nor water spun, nor coal eaten. The wise man shows his wisdom in separation, 5 in gradation, and his scale of creatures and of merits is as wide as nature. The foolish have no range in their scale, but suppose every man is as every other man. What is not good they call the worst, and what is not hateful, they call the best.

In like manner, what good heed nature forms in us! She pardons no mistakes. Her yea is yea, and her nay, nay. 10

The first steps in Agriculture, Astronomy, Zoölogy, (those first steps which the farmer, the hunter, and the sailor take,) teach that nature's dice are always loaded; that in her heaps and rubbish are concealed sure and useful results. 15

How calmly and genially the mind apprehends one after another the laws of physics! What noble emotions dilate the mortal as he enters into the counsels of the creation, and feels by knowledge the privilege to BE! His insight refines him. The beauty of nature shines in his own breast. Man is greater [that] he can see this, and the universe less, because Time and Space relations vanish as 20 laws are known.

Here again we are impressed and even daunted by the immense Universe to be explored. "What we know, is a point to what we do not know." Open any recent journal of science, and weigh the problems suggested concerning Light, Heat, Electricity, Magnetism, Physiology, Geology, and judge whether the in- 25 terest of natural science is likely to be soon exhausted.

Passing by many particulars of the discipline of nature, we must not omit to specify two.

The exercise of the Will or the lesson of power is taught in every event. From the child's successive possession of his several senses up to the hour when he saith, "Thy will be done!" he is learning the secret, that he can reduce under his will, not only particular events, but great classes, nay the whole series of events, and so conform all facts to his character. Nature is thoroughly mediate. It is made to serve. It receives the dominion of man as meekly as the ass on which the Saviour rode. It offers all its kingdoms to man as the raw material 35 which he may mould into what is useful. Man is never weary of working it up. He forges the subtle and delicate air into wise and melodious words, and gives them wing as angels of persuasion and command. One after another, his victorious thought comes up with and reduces all things, until the world becomes at last only a realized will,—the double of the man. 40

2. Sensible objects conform to the premonitions of Reason and reflect the conscience. All things are moral; and in their boundless changes have an unceasing reference to spiritual nature. Therefore is nature glorious with form, color, and motion, that every globe in the remotest heaven; every chemical change from the rudest crystal up to the laws of life; every change of vegeta- 45

19. [that]—"than" (1849). 34-35. ass . . . Saviour—Cf. Matt. 21: 5. 35. kingdoms—Cf. Matt. 4: 28.

tion from the first principle of growth in the eye of a leaf, to the tropical forest and antediluvian coal-mine; every animal function from the sponge up to Hercules, shall hint or thunder to man the laws of right and wrong, and echo the Ten Commandments. Therefore is nature ever the ally of Religion: lends all  
 5 her pomp and riches to the religious sentiment. Prophet and priest, David, Isaiah, Jesus, have drawn deeply from this source. This ethical character so penetrates the bone and marrow of nature, as to seem the end for which it was made. Whatever private purpose is answered by any member or part, this is its public and universal function, and is never omitted. Nothing in nature is ex-  
 10 hausted in its first use. When a thing has served an end to the uttermost, it is wholly new for an ulterior service. In God, every end is converted into a new means. Thus the use of commodity, regarded by itself, is mean and squalid. But it is to the mind an education in the doctrine of Use, namely, that a thing is good only so far as it serves; that a conspiring of parts and efforts to the  
 15 production of an end is essential to any being. The first and gross manifestations of this truth, is our inevitable and hated training in values and wants, in corn and meat.

It has already been illustrated, that every natural process is a version of a moral sentence. The moral law lies at the centre of nature and radiates to the  
 20 circumference. It is the pith and marrow of every substance, every relation, and every process. All things with which we deal, preach to us. What is a farm but a mute gospel? The chaff and the wheat, weeds and plants, blight, rain, insects, sun,—it is a sacred emblem from the first furrow of spring to the last stack which the snow of winter overtakes in the fields. But the sailor, the shep-  
 25 herd, the miner, the merchant, in their several resorts, have each an experience precisely parallel, and leading to the same conclusion: because all organizations are radically alike. Nor can it be doubted that this moral sentiment which thus scents the air, grows in the grain, and impregnates the waters of the world, is caught by man and sinks into his soul. The moral influence of nature upon  
 30 every individual is that amount of truth which it illustrates to him. Who can estimate this? Who can guess how much firmness the sea-beaten rock has taught the fisherman? how much tranquillity has been reflected to man from the azure sky, over whose unspotted deeps the winds forevermore drive flocks of stormy clouds, and leave no wrinkle or stain? how much industry and provi-  
 35 dence and affection we have caught from the pantomime of brutes? What a searching preacher of self-command is the varying phenomenon of Health!

Herein is especially apprehended the unity of Nature,—the unity in variety,—which meets us everywhere. All the endless variety of things make an identical impression. Xenophanes complained in his old age, that, look where he would,  
 40 all things hastened back to Unity. He was weary of seeing the same entity in the tedious variety of forms. The fable of Proteus has a cordial truth. A leaf, a drop, a crystal, a moment of time, is related to the whole, and partakes of the

1-2. **tropical . . . coal-mine**—Coal deposits represent decayed vegetable matter overwhelmed and buried by great changes of nature. 2. **Hercules**—type of strong man in classical myth. 13. **Use**—indirect reference to the philosophy of utilitarianism as taught by Jeremy Bentham and his followers. 39. **Xenophanes**—(570-480 B.C.) the Greek founder of the Eleatic philosophy which taught the unity of God and nature. 41. **Proteus**—in Greek mythology, a figure who could assume any shape at will.

perfection of the whole. Each particle is a microcosm, and faithfully renders the likeness of the world.

Not only resemblances exist in things whose analogy is obvious, as when we detect the type of the human hand in the flipper of the fossil saurus, but also in objects wherein there is great superficial unlikeness. Thus architecture is called "frozen music," by De Stael and Goethe. Vitruvius thought an architect should be a musician. "A Gothic church," said Coleridge, "is a petrified religion." Michael Angelo maintained, that, to an architect, a knowledge of anatomy is essential. In Haydn's oratorios, the notes present to the imagination not only motions, as, of the snake, the stag, and the elephant, but colors also; as the green grass. The law of harmonic sounds reappears in the harmonic colors. The granite is differenced in its laws only by the more or less of heat from the river that wears it away. The river, as it flows, resembles the air that flows over it; the air resembles the light which traverses it with more subtile currents; the light resembles the heat which rides with it through Space. Each creature is only a modification of the other; the likeness in them is more than the difference, and their radical law is one and the same. A rule of one art, or a law of one organization, holds true throughout nature. So intimate is this Unity, that, it is easily seen, it lies under the undermost garment of nature, and betrays its source in Universal Spirit. For it pervades Thought also. Every universal truth which we express in words, implies or supposes every other truth. *Omne verum vero consonat*. It is like a great circle on a sphere, comprising all possible circles; which, however, may be drawn and comprise it in like manner. Every such truth is the absolute Ens seen from one side. But it has innumerable sides.

The central Unity is still more conspicuous in actions. Words are finite organs of the infinite mind. They cannot cover the dimensions of what is in truth. They break, chop, and impoverish it. An action is the perfection and publication of thought. A right action seems to fill the eye, and to be related to all nature. "The wise man, in doing one thing, does all; or, in the one thing he does rightly, he sees the likeness of all which is done rightly."

Words and actions are not the attributes of brute nature. They introduce us to the human form, of which all other organizations appear to be degradations. When this appears among so many that surround it, the spirit prefers it to all others. It says, 'From such as this, have I drawn joy and knowledge; in such as this, have I found and beheld myself; I will speak to it; it can speak again; it can yield me thought already formed and alive.' In fact, the eye,—the mind,—is always accompanied by these forms, male and female; and these are incom-

4. type—early form. 4. saurus—any extinct reptilian animal known only in fossil remains. 6. frozen . . . Goethe—Cf. Emerson's *Journals*, Vol. III, p. 363. The reference is to a passage in *Corinne*, Bk. IV, Chap. III, by Madame de Staël (1766-1817); and to *Goethe's Conversations with Eckermann* under date of Mar. 23, 1829. 6-7. Vitruvius . . . musician—The reference is to Vitruvius, *De architectura*, Bk. I, Chap. I, Sec. 8. 7-8. "A Gothic . . . religion"—"A Gothic cathedral is the petrification of our religion."—Coleridge, "Lecture on the General Character of the Gothic Mind in the Middle Ages" (*Literary Remains*), 1836. 8-9. Michael . . . essential—Emerson reworked in *Nature* passages from a lecture on Michelangelo delivered in Boston, January, 1835, and published in the *North American Review*, Vol. XLIV (January, 1837), pp. 1-16. 9. Haydn's—Emerson seems to have especially in mind *The Creation* (1798), an oratorio by Josef Haydn (1732-1809), in which the music seeks to paint the pictures Emerson describes. 21-22. *Omne . . . consonat*—Every truth agrees with every other truth. 24. Ens—Being.

parably the richest informations of the power and order that lie at the heart of things. Unfortunately every one of them bears the marks as of some injury; is marred and superficially defective. Nevertheless, far different from the deaf and dumb nature around them, these all rest like fountain-pipes on the unfathomed sea of thought and virtue whereto they alone, of all organizations, are the entrances.

It were a pleasant inquiry to follow into detail their ministry to our education, but where would it stop? We are associated in adolescent and adult life with some friends, who, like skies and waters, are coextensive with our idea; who, answering each to a certain affection of the soul, satisfy our desire on that side; whom we lack power to put at such focal distance from us, that we can mend or even analyze them. We cannot choose but love them. When much intercourse with a friend has supplied us with a standard of excellence, and has increased our respect for the resources of God who thus sends a real person to outgo our ideal; when he has, moreover, become an object of thought, and, whilst his character retains all its unconscious effect, is converted in the mind into solid and sweet wisdom,—it is a sign to us that his office is closing, and he is commonly withdrawn from our sight in a short time.

## CHAPTER VI

20

### IDEALISM

Thus is the unspeakable but intelligible and practicable meaning of the world conveyed to man, the immortal pupil, in every object of sense. To this one end of Discipline, all parts of nature conspire.

A noble doubt perpetually suggests itself, whether this end be not the Final Cause of the Universe; and whether nature outwardly exists. It is a sufficient account of that Appearance we call the World, that God will teach a human mind, and so makes it the receiver of a certain number of congruent sensations, which we call sun and moon, man and woman, house and trade. In my utter impotence to test the authenticity of the report of my senses, to know whether the impressions they make on me correspond with outlying objects, what difference does it make, whether Orion is up there in heaven, or some god paints the image in the firmament of the soul? The relations of parts and the end of the whole remaining the same, what is the difference, whether land and sea interact, and worlds revolve and intermingle without number or end,—deep yawning under deep, and galaxy balancing galaxy, throughout absolute space,—or whether, without relations of time and space, the same appearances are inscribed in the constant faith of man? Whether nature enjoy a substantial existence without, or is only in the apocalypse of the mind, it is alike useful and alike venerable to me. Be it what it may, it is ideal to me so long as I cannot try the accuracy of my senses.

The frivolous make themselves merry with the Ideal theory, as if its conse-

38. *apocalypse*—revelation. 41. *Ideal theory*—the transcendental philosophy, which, by placing knowable reality in the mind, seems to the unthinking to deny the existence of the external world, and to give the control of the external world to the mind.

quences were burlesque; as if it affected the stability of nature. It surely does not. God never jests with us, and will not compromise the end of nature by permitting any inconsequence in its procession. Any distrust of the permanence of laws would paralyze the faculties of man. Their permanence is sacredly respected, and his faith therein is perfect. The wheels and springs of man are all set to the hypothesis of the permanence of nature. We are not built like a ship to be tossed, but like a house to stand. It is a natural consequence of this structure, that, so long as the active powers predominate over the reflective, we resist with indignation any hint that nature is more short-lived or mutable than spirit. The broker, the wheelwright, the carpenter, the tollman, are much displeased at the intimation. 5 10

But whilst we acquiesce entirely in the permanence of natural laws, the question of the absolute existence of nature still remains open. It is the uniform effect of culture on the human mind, not to shake our faith in the stability of particular phenomena, as of heat, water, azote; but to lead us to regard nature as a phenomenon, not a substance; to attribute necessary existence to spirit; to esteem nature as an accident and an effect. 15

To the senses and the unrenewed understanding, belongs a sort of instinctive belief in the absolute existence of nature. In their view, man and nature are indissolubly joined. Things are ultimates, and they never look beyond their sphere. The presence of Reason mars this faith. The first effort of thought tends to relax this despotism of the senses, which binds us to nature as if we were a part of it, and shows us nature aloof, and, as it were, afloat. Until this higher agency intervened, the animal eye sees, with wonderful accuracy, sharp outlines and colored surfaces. When the eye of Reason opens, to outline and surface are at once added grace and expression. These proceed from imagination and affection, and abate somewhat of the angular distinctness of objects. If the Reason be stimulated to more earnest vision, outlines and surfaces become transparent, and are no longer seen; causes and spirits are seen through them. The best moments of life are these delicious awakenings of the higher powers, and the reverential withdrawing of nature before its God. 20 25 30

Let us proceed to indicate the effects of culture. 1. Our first institution in the Ideal philosophy is a hint from nature herself.

Nature is made to conspire with spirit to emancipate us. Certain mechanical changes, a small alteration in our local position apprizes us of a dualism. We are strangely affected by seeing the shore from a moving ship, from a balloon, or through the tints of an unusual sky. The least change in our point of view, gives the whole world a pictorial air. A man who seldom rides, needs only to get into a coach and traverse his own town, to turn the street into a puppet-show. The men, the women,—talking, running, bartering, fighting,—the earnest mechanic, the loungeur, the beggar, the boys, the dogs, are unrealized at once, or, at least, wholly detached from all relation to the observer, and seen as apparent, not substantial beings. What new thoughts are suggested by seeing a face of country quite familiar, in the rapid movement of the rail-road car! Nay, the most wonted objects, (make a very slight change in the point of vision,) 35 40 45

3. **inconsequence**—inconsistency. 10. **tollman**—toll-gatherer on a privately built road. 15. **azote**—nitrogen. 41. **unrealized**—that is, seen not to be absolute realities.



please us most. In a camera obscura, the butcher's cart, and the figure of one of our own family amuse us. So a portrait of a well-known face gratifies us. Turn the eyes upside down, by looking at the landscape through your legs, and how agreeable is the picture, though you have seen it any time these twenty years!

- 5 In these cases, by mechanical means, is suggested the difference between the observer and the spectacle,—between man and nature. Hence arises a pleasure mixed with awe; I may say, a low degree of the sublime is felt from the fact, probably, that man is hereby apprized, that, whilst the world is a spectacle, something in himself is stable.
- 10 2. In a higher manner, the poet communicates the same pleasure. By a few strokes he delineates, as on air, the sun, the mountain, the camp, the city, the hero, the maiden, not different from what we know them, but only lifted from the ground and afloat before the eye. He unfixes the land and the sea, makes them revolve around the axis of his primary thought, and disposes them anew.
- 15 Possessed himself by a heroic passion, he uses matter as symbols of it. The sensual man conforms thoughts to things; the poet conforms things to his thoughts. The one esteems nature as rooted and fast; the other, as fluid, and impresses his being thereon. To him, the refractory world is ductile and flexible; he invests dust and stones with humanity, and makes them the words of the Reason. The
- 20 Imagination may be defined to be, the use which the Reason makes of the material world. Shakspeare possesses the power of subordinating nature for the purposes of expression, beyond all poets. His imperial muse tosses the creation like a bauble from hand to hand, and uses it to embody any caprice of thought that is uppermost in his mind. The remotest spaces of nature are visited, and
- 25 the farthest sundered things are brought together, by a subtle spiritual connection. We are made aware that magnitude of material things is relative, and all objects shrink and expand to serve the passion of the poet. Thus, in his sonnets, the lays of birds, the scents and dyes of flowers, he finds to be the *shadow* of his beloved; time, which keeps her from him, is his *chest*; the suspicion she
- 30 has awakened, is her *ornament*;

The ornament of beauty is Suspect,  
A crow which flies in heaven's sweetest air.

His passion is not the fruit of chance; it swells, as he speaks, to a city, or a state.

- 35 No, it was builded far from accident;  
It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls  
Under the brow of thralling discontent;  
It fears not policy, that heretic,  
That works on leases of short numbered hours,  
But all alone stands hugely politic.

- 40 In the strength of his constancy, the Pyramids seem to him recent and transi-

i. camera obscura—ancestor of the camera. 28-29. lays . . . chest—Cf. Shakspeare's Sonnet xcvi. 31-32. The ornament . . . air—from Sonnet lxx, slightly misquoted. 34-39. No . . . politic—Condensed and slightly misquoted from Sonnet cxxiv. 40. Pyramids—Cf. Sonnet cxxiii:

"The pyramids built up with newer might  
To me are nothing novel, nothing strange."

tory. The freshness of youth and love dazzles him with its resemblance to morning.

Take those lips away  
Which so sweetly were forsworn;  
And those eyes,—the break of day,  
Lights that do mislead the morn.

5

The wild beauty of this hyperbole, I may say, in passing, it would not be easy to match in literature.

This transfiguration which all material objects undergo through the passion of the poet,—this power which he exerts to dwarf the great, to magnify the small,—might be illustrated by a thousand examples from his Plays. I have before me the *Tempest*, and will cite only these few lines.

ARIEL. The strong based promontory  
Have I made shake, and by the spurs plucked up  
The pine and cedar.

15

Prospero calls for music to soothe the frantic Alonzo, and his companions;

A solemn air, and the best comforter  
To an unsettled fancy, cure thy brains  
Now useless, boiled within thy skull.

Again;

The charm dissolves apace,  
And, as the morning steals upon the night,  
Melting the darkness, so their rising senses  
Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle  
Their clearer reason.

20

Their understanding  
Begins to swell: and the approaching tide  
Will shortly fill the reasonable shores  
That now lie foul and muddy.

25

The perception of real affinities between events, (that is to say, of *ideal* affinities, for those only are real,) enables the poet thus to make free with the most imposing forms and phenomena of the world, and to assert the predominance of the soul.

3. Whilst thus the poet animates nature with his own thoughts, he differs from the philosopher only herein, that the one proposes Beauty as his main end; the other Truth. But the philosopher, not less than the poet, postpones the apparent order and relations of things to the empire of thought. "The problem of philosophy," according to Plato, "is, for all that exists conditionally, to find a ground unconditioned and absolute." It proceeds on the faith that a law determines all phenomena, which being known, the phenomena can be predicted. That law, when in the mind, is an idea. Its beauty is infinite. The true philosopher and the true poet are one, and a beauty, which is truth, and a truth,

35

40

3-6. Take . . . morn—Slightly misquoted from *Measure for Measure*, Act iv, scene i. 13-15. The strong . . . cedar—These lines are spoken by Prospero, not by Ariel, *The Tempest*, Act v, scene i. The rest of the quoted material is from the same scene. 38. Plato—Cf. the *Republic*, Bk. V.

which is beauty, is the aim of both. Is not the charm of one of Plato's or Aristotle's definitions strictly like that of the *Antigone* of Sophocles? It is, in both cases, that a spiritual life has been imparted to nature; that the solid seeming block of matter has been pervaded and dissolved by a thought; that this feeble human being has penetrated the vast masses of nature with an informing soul, and recognized itself in their harmony, that is, seized their law. In physics, when this is attained, the memory disburthens itself of its cumbrous catalogues of particulars, and carries centuries of observation in a single formula.

Thus even in physics, the material is degraded before the spiritual. The astronomer, the geometer, rely on their irrefragable analysis, and disdain the results of observation. The sublime remark of Euler on his law of arches, "This will be found contrary to all experience, yet is true;" had already transferred nature into the mind, and left matter like an outcast corpse.

4. Intellectual science has been observed to beget invariably a doubt of the existence of matter. Turgot said, "He that has never doubted the existence of matter, may be assured he has no aptitude for metaphysical inquiries." It fastens the attention upon immortal necessary uncreated natures, that is, upon Ideas; and in their presence, we feel that the outward circumstance is a dream and a shade. Whilst we wait in this Olympus of gods, we think of nature as an appendix to the soul. We ascend into their region, and know that these are the thoughts of the Supreme Being. "These are they who were set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When he prepared the heavens, they were there; when he established the clouds above, when he strengthened the fountains of the deep. Then they were by him, as one brought up with him. Of them took he counsel."

Their influence is proportionate. As objects of science they are accessible to few men. Yet all men are capable of being raised by piety or by passion, into their region. And no man touches these divine natures, without becoming, in some degree, himself divine. Like a new soul, they renew the body. We become physically nimble and lightsome; we tread on air; life is no longer irksome, and we think it will never be so. No man fears age or misfortune or death, in their serene company, for he is transported out of the district of change. Whilst we behold unveiled the nature of Justice and Truth, we learn the difference between the absolute and the conditional or relative. We apprehend the absolute. As it were, for the first time, *we exist*. We become immortal, for we learn that time and space are relations of matter; that, with a perception of truth, or a virtuous will, they have no affinity.

5. Finally, religion and ethics, which may be fitly called,—the practice of ideas, or the introduction of ideas into life,—have an analogous effect with all lower culture, in degrading nature and suggesting its dependence on spirit. Ethics and religion differ herein; that the one is the system of human duties commencing from man; the other, from God. Religion includes the personality of God; Ethics does not. They are one to our present design. They both put

2. *Antigone*—The *Antigone* is one of the finest tragedies of the Greek dramatist Sophocles (496-406 B.C.). 11. *Euler*—Leonhard Euler (1707-1783), Swiss mathematician. 15. *Turgot*—Anne Robert Jacques Turgot (1727-1781), French economist and statesman. 21. "These are they"—Cf. Prov. 8:23, 27, 28, 30.

nature under foot. The first and last lesson of religion is, "The things that are seen, are temporal; the things that are unseen, are eternal." It puts an affront upon nature. It does that for the unschooled, which philosophy does for Berkeley and Viasa. The uniform language that may be heard in the churches of the most ignorant sects, is,—*"Contemn the unsubstantial shows of the world; they are vanities, dreams, shadows, unrealities; seek the realities of religion."* The devotee flouts nature. Some theosophists have arrived at a certain hostility and indignation towards matter, as the Manichean and Plotinus. They distrusted in themselves any looking back to these flesh-pots of Egypt. Plotinus was ashamed of his body. In short, they might all say of matter, what Michael Angelo said of external beauty, "it is the frail and weary weed, in which God dresses the soul, which he has called into time."

It appears that motion, poetry, physical and intellectual science, and religion, all tend to affect our convictions of the reality of the external world. But I own there is something ungrateful in expanding too curiously the particulars of the general proposition, that all culture tends to imbue us with idealism. I have no hostility to nature, but a child's love to it. I expand and live in the warm day like corn and melons. Let us speak her fair. I do not wish to fling stones at my beautiful mother, nor soil my gentle nest. I only wish to indicate the true position of nature in regard to man, wherein to establish man, all right education tends; as the ground which to attain is the object of human life, that is, of man's connection with nature. Culture inverts the vulgar views of nature, and brings the mind to call that apparent, which it uses to call real, and that real, which it uses to call visionary. Children, it is true, believe in the external world. The belief that it appears only, is an afterthought, but with culture, this faith will as surely arise on the mind as did the first.

The advantage of the ideal theory over the popular faith, is this, that it presents the world in precisely that view which is most desirable to the mind. It is, in fact, the view which Reason, both speculative and practical, that is, philosophy and virtue, take. For, seen in the light of thought, the world always is phenomenal; and virtue subordinates it to the mind. Idealism sees the world in God. It beholds the whole circle of persons and things, of actions and events, of country and religion, not as painfully accumulated, atom after atom, act after act, in an aged creeping Past, but as one vast picture, which God paints on the instant eternity, for the contemplation of the soul. Therefore the soul holds itself off from a too trivial and microscopic study of the universal tablet. It respects the end too much, to immerse itself in the means. It sees something more

1-2. "The things . . . eternal"—*Cf.* II Cor. 4: 18. 3-4. Berkeley . . . Viasa—George Berkeley (1685-1753), British philosopher and bishop, who taught a system of idealistic philosophy; Vyasa, a legendary Hindu sage to whom the great mass of Sanskrit literature is attributed. 7. theosophists—here used to mean especially those philosophers of a mystical temperament. 8. Manichean . . . Plotinus—A Manichean is a believer in the philosophy of Mani, or Manes, a Persian of the third century A.D., who taught that man's body was derived from evil or darkness, his soul from goodness or light. Plotinus (204?-270), an Egyptian living at Rome, modified the teachings of Plato in the direction of a symbolic and mystical idealism. 9. flesh-pots—*Cf.* Ex. 16: 3. 29. Reason . . . practical—The practical reason is, in transcendental terminology, the same as the understanding or common-sense logic; the speculative reason is pure intellect. Conduct in common life, well ordered by the practical reason, becomes virtue; the speculative reason, or Reason (as opposed to Understanding), achieves metaphysics (philosophy).

important in Christianity, than the scandals of ecclesiastical history, or the niceties of criticism; and, very incurious concerning persons or miracles, and not at all disturbed by chasms of historical evidence, it accepts from God the phenomenon, as it finds it, as the pure and awful form of religion in the world.

- 5 It is not hot and passionate at the appearance of what it calls its own good or bad fortune, at the union or opposition of other persons. No man is its enemy. It accepts whatsoever befalls, as part of its lesson. It is a watcher more than a doer, and it is a doer, only that it may the better watch.

## CHAPTER VII

10

### SPIRIT

It is essential to a true theory of nature and of man, that it should contain somewhat progressive. Uses that are exhausted or that may be, and facts that end in the statement, cannot be all that is true of this brave lodging wherein man is harbored, and wherein all his faculties find appropriate and endless

15 exercise. And all the uses of nature admit of being summed in one, which yields the activity of man an infinite scope. Through all its kingdoms, to the suburbs and outskirts of things, it is faithful to the cause whence it had its origin. It always speaks of Spirit. It suggests the absolute. It is a perpetual effect. It is a great shadow pointing always to the sun behind us.

- 20 The aspect of nature is devout. Like the figure of Jesus, she stands with bended head, and hands folded upon the breast. The happiest man is he who learns from nature the lesson of worship.

- Of that ineffable essence which we call Spirit, he that thinks most, will say least. We can foresee God in the coarse, and, as it were, distant phenomena of
- 25 matter; but when we try to define and describe himself, both language and thought desert us, and we are as helpless as fools and savages. That essence refuses to be recorded in propositions, but when man has worshipped him intellectually, the noblest ministry of nature is to stand as the apparition of God. It is the organ through which the universal spirit speaks to the individual,
- 30 and strives to lead back the individual to it.

When we consider Spirit, we see that the views already presented do not include the whole circumference of man. We must add some related thoughts.

- Three problems are put by nature to the mind; What is matter? Whence is it? and Whereto? The first of these questions only, the ideal theory answers.
- 35 Idealism saith: matter is a phenomenon, not a substance. Idealism acquaints us with the total disparity between the evidence of our own being, and the evidence of the world's being. The one is perfect; the other, incapable of any assurance; the mind is a part of the nature of things; the world is a divine dream, from which we may presently awake to the glories and certainties of
- 40 day. Idealism is a hypothesis to account for nature by other principles than those of carpentry and chemistry. Yet, if it only deny the existence of matter, it does not satisfy the demands of the spirit. It leaves God out of me. It leaves me in the splendid labyrinth of my perceptions, to wander without end. Then the heart resists it, because it balks the affections in denying substantive

being to men and women. Nature is so pervaded with human life that there is something of humanity in all, and in every particular. But this theory makes nature foreign to me, and does not account for that consanguinity which we acknowledge to it.

Let it stand, then, in the present state of our knowledge, merely as a useful introductory hypothesis, serving to apprise us of the eternal distinction between the soul and the world. 5

But when, following the invisible steps of thought, we come to inquire, Whence is matter? and Whereto? many truths arise to us out of the recesses of consciousness. We learn that the highest is present to the soul of man, that the dread universal essence, which is not wisdom, or love, or beauty, or power, but all in one, and each entirely, is that for which all things exist, and that by which they are; that spirit creates; that behind nature, throughout nature, spirit is present; one and not compound, it does not act upon us from without, that is, in space and time, but spiritually, or through ourselves: therefore, that spirit, that is, the Supreme Being, does not build up nature around us, but puts it forth through us, as the life of the tree puts forth new branches and leaves through the pores of the old. As a plant upon the earth, so a man rests upon the bosom of God; he is nourished by unfailing fountains, and draws, at his need, inexhaustible power. Who can set bounds to the possibilities of man? Once inhale the upper air, being admitted to behold the absolute natures of justice and truth, and we learn that man has access to the entire mind of the Creator, is himself the creator in the finite. This view, which admonishes me where the sources of wisdom and power lie, and points to virtue as to 10 15 20

"The golden key  
Which opes the palace of eternity," 25

carries upon its face the highest certificate of truth, because it animates me to create my own world through the purification of my soul.

The world proceeds from the same spirit as the body of man. It is a remoter and inferior incarnation of God, a projection of God in the unconscious. But it differs from the body in one important respect. It is not, like that, now subjected to the human will. Its serene order is inviolable by us. It is, therefore, to us, the present expositor of the divine mind. It is a fixed point whereby we may measure our departure. As we degenerate, the contrast between us and our house is more evident. We are as much strangers in nature, as we are aliens from God. We do not understand the notes of birds. The fox and the deer run away from us; the bear and tiger rend us. We do not know the uses of more than a few plants, as corn and the apple, the potato and the vine. Is not the landscape, every glimpse of which hath a grandeur, a face of him? Yet this may show us what discord is between man and nature, for you cannot freely admire a noble landscape, if laborers are digging in the field hard by. The poet finds something ridiculous in his delight until he is out of the sight of men. 30 35 40

25-26. "The golden . . . eternity"—from Milton's *Comus*, lines 13-14. 29. proceeds—emanates.

## CHAPTER VIII

## PROSPECTS

In inquiries respecting the laws of the world and the frame of things, the highest reason is always the truest. That which seems faintly possible—it is so refined, is often faint and dim because it is deepest seated in the mind among the eternal verities. Empirical science is apt to cloud the sight, and by the very knowledge of functions and processes, to bereave the student of the manly contemplation of the whole. The savant becomes unpoetic. But the best read naturalist who lends an entire and devout attention to truth, will see that there remains much to learn of his relation to the world, and that it is not to be learned by any addition or subtraction or other comparison of known quantities, but is arrived at by untaught sallies of the spirit, by a continual self-recovery, and by entire humility. He will perceive that there are far more excellent qualities in the student than preciseness and infallibility; that a guess is often more fruitful than an indisputable affirmation, and that a dream may let us deeper into the secret of nature than a hundred concerted experiments.

For the problems to be solved are precisely those which the physiologist and the naturalist omit to state. It is not so pertinent to man to know all the individuals of the animal kingdom, as it is to know whence and whereto is this tyrannizing unity in his constitution, which evermore separates and classifies things, endeavoring to reduce the most diverse to one form. When I behold a rich landscape, it is less to my purpose to recite correctly the order and superposition of the strata, than to know why all thought of multitude is lost in a tranquil sense of unity. I cannot greatly honor minuteness in details, so long as there is no hint to explain the relation between things and thoughts; no ray upon the *metaphysics* of conchology, of botany, of the arts, to show the relation of the forms of flowers, shells, animals, architecture, to the mind, and build science upon ideas. In a cabinet of natural history, we become sensible of a certain occult recognition and sympathy in regard to the most unwieldy and eccentric forms of beast, fish, and insect. The American who has been confined, in his own country, to the sight of buildings designed after foreign models, is surprised on entering York Minster or St. Peter's at Rome, by the feeling that these structures are imitations also,—faint copies of an invisible archetype. Nor has science sufficient humanity, so long as the naturalist overlooks that wonderful congruity which subsists between man and the world; of which he is lord, not because he is the most subtle inhabitant, but because he is its head and heart, and finds something of himself in every great and small thing, in every mountain stratum, in every new law of color, fact of astronomy, or atmospheric influence which observation or analysis lays open. A perception of this mystery

6. *Empirical*—Experimental. 8. *savant*—expert. 26. *metaphysics*—here, first causes. 26. *conchology*—science of shells and shellfish. 28. *cabinet of natural history*—case of specimens. Before the increase of laboratories in universities and colleges, the collecting of specimens in a cabinet was a common mode of acquiring knowledge of natural history. 32. *York Minster*—York Cathedral, one of the most famous of English cathedrals. 32. *St. Peter's*—the famous cathedral at Rome.

inspires the muse of George Herbert, the beautiful psalmist of the seventeenth century. The following lines are part of his little poem on Man.

- "Man is all symmetry,  
 Full of proportions, one limb to another,  
 And to all the world besides. 5  
 Each part may call the farthest, brother;  
 For head with foot hath private amity,  
 And both with moons and tides.
- "Nothing hath got so far  
 But man hath caught and kept it as his prey; 10  
 His eyes dismount the highest star:  
 He is in little all the sphere.  
 Herbs gladly cure our flesh, because that they  
 Find their acquaintance there.
- "For us, the winds do blow, 15  
 The earth doth rest, heaven move, and fountains flow;  
 Nothing we see, but means our good,  
 As our delight, or as our treasure;  
 The whole is either our cupboard of food,  
 Or cabinet of pleasure. 20
- "The stars have us to bed:  
 Night draws the curtain; which the sun withdraws.  
 Music and light attend our head.  
 All things unto our flesh are kind,  
 In their descent and being; to our mind, 25  
 In their ascent and cause.
- "More servants wait on man  
 Than he'll take notice of. In every path,  
 He treads down that which doth befriend him  
 When sickness makes him pale and wan. 30  
 Oh mighty love! Man is one world, and hath  
 Another to attend him."

The perception of this class of truths makes the attraction which draws men to science, but the end is lost sight of in attention to the means. In view of this half-sight of science, we accept the sentence of Plato, that, "poetry comes nearer to vital truth than history." Every surmise and vaticination of the mind is entitled to a certain respect, and we learn to prefer imperfect theories, and sentences which contain glimpses of truth, to digested systems which have no one valuable suggestion. A wise writer will feel that the ends of study and composition are best answered by announcing undiscovered regions of thought, and so communicating, through hope, new activity to the torpid spirit. 35 40

I shall therefore conclude this essay with some traditions of man and nature,

1. **Herbert**—George Herbert (1593-1633), English poet and divine. From his poem "Man" Emerson quotes stanzas 3-6 and 8, omitting stanzas 1, 2, 7, and 9. 35. **Plato**—probably from *The Laws*, Bk. III, 682. 36. **vaticination**—prophecy, forecast.



which a certain poet sang to me; and which, as they have always been in the world, and perhaps reappear to every bard, may be both history and prophecy.

The foundations of man are not in matter, but in spirit. But the element of spirit is eternity. To it, therefore, the longest series of events, the oldest  
 5 chronologies are young and recent. In the cycle of the universal man, from whom the known individuals proceed, centuries are points, and all history is but the epoch of one degradation.

We distrust and deny inwardly our sympathy with nature. We own and disown our relation to it, by turns. We are, like Nebuchadnezzar, dethroned,  
 10 bereft of reason, and eating grass like an ox. But who can set limits to the remedial force of spirit?

A man is a god in ruins. When men are innocent, life shall be longer, and shall pass into the immortal, as gently as we awake from dreams. Now, the world would be insane and rabid, if these disorganizations should last for  
 15 hundreds of years. It is kept in check by death and infancy. Infancy is the perpetual Messiah, which comes into the arms of fallen men, and pleads with them to return to paradise.

Man is the dwarf of himself. Once he was permeated and dissolved by spirit. He filled nature with his overflowing currents. Out from him sprang  
 20 the sun and moon; from man the sun; from woman, the moon. The laws of his mind, the periods of his actions externized themselves into day and night, into the year and the seasons. But, having made for himself this huge shell, his waters retired; he no longer fills the veins and veinlets; he is shrunk to a drop. He sees, that the structure still fits him, but fits him colossally. Say, rather,  
 25 once it fitted him, now it corresponds to him from far and on high. He adores timidly his own work. Now is man the follower of the sun, and woman the follower of the moon. Yet sometimes he starts in his slumber, and wonders at himself and his house, and muses strangely at the resemblance betwixt him and it. He perceives that if his law is still paramount, if still he have elemental  
 30 power, if his word is stealing yet in nature, it is not conscious power, it is not inferior but superior to his will. It is instinct.' Thus my Orphic poet sang.

At present, man applies to nature but half his force. He works on the world with his understanding alone. He lives in it, and masters it by a penny-wisdom; and he that works most in it, is but a half-man, and whilst his arms  
 35 are strong and his digestion good, his mind is imbruted, and he is a selfish savage. His relation to nature, his power over it, is through the understanding; as by manure; the economic use of fire, wind, water, and the mariner's needle; steam, coal, chemical agriculture; the repairs of the human body by the dentist and the surgeon. This is such a resumption of power, as if a banished king  
 40 should buy his territories inch by inch, instead of vaulting at once into his

1. **certain poet**—Emerson was fond of setting up an *alter ego* in whose mouth he could place passages he did not care to express directly. This personage is sometimes nameless, as here, and sometimes Saadi, Osman, and so on. The present passage, however, is based on the "Orphic sayings" of Amos Bronson Alcott. 9. **Nebuchadnezzar**—Cf. Dan. 4:33. 31. **Orphic**—Orpheus, who in Greek mythology could move rocks and trees by his music, became for the romantics a type of the creative power of the imagination. For the transcendentalists especially an "orphyic" utterance meant that half-veiled, symbolic utterance of cloudy truths which seemed to them the highest wisdom.

throne. Meantime, in the thick darkness, there are not wanting gleams of a better light,—occasional examples of the action of man upon nature with his entire force,—with reason as well as understanding. Such examples are; the traditions of miracles in the earliest antiquity of all nations; the history of Jesus Christ; the achievements of a principle, as in religious and political revolutions, and in the abolition of the Slave-trade; the miracles of enthusiasm, as those reported of Swedenborg, Hohenlohe, and the Shakers; many obscure and yet contested facts, now arranged under the name of Animal Magnetism; prayer; eloquence; self-healing; and the wisdom of children. These are examples of Reason's momentary grasp of the sceptre; the exertions of a power which exists not in time or space, but an instantaneous instreaming causing power. The difference between the actual and the ideal force of man is happily figured by the schoolmen, in saying that the knowledge of man is an evening knowledge, *vespertina cognitio*, but that of God is a morning knowledge, *matutina cognitio*.

The problem of restoring to the world original and eternal beauty, is solved by the redemption of the soul. The ruin or the blank that we see when we look at nature, is in our own eye. The axis of vision is not coincident with the axis of things, and so they appear not transparent but opaque. The reason why the world lacks unity, and lies broken and in heaps, is, because man is disunited with himself. He cannot be a naturalist, until he satisfies all the demands of the spirit. Love is as much its demand as perception. Indeed, neither can be perfect without the other. In the uttermost meaning of the words, thought is devout, and devotion is thought. Deep calls unto deep. But in actual life, the marriage is not celebrated. There are innocent men who worship God after the tradition of their fathers, but their sense of duty has not yet extended to the use of all their faculties. And there are patient naturalists, but they freeze their subject under the wintry light of the understanding. Is not prayer also a study of truth,—a sally of the soul into the unfound infinite? No man ever prayed heartily without learning something. But when a faithful thinker, resolute to detach every object from personal relations and see it in the light of thought, shall, at the same time, kindle science with the fire of the holiest affections, then will God go forth anew into the creation.

It will not need, when the mind is prepared for study, to search for objects. The invariable mark of wisdom is to see the miraculous in the common. What is a day? What is a year? What is summer? What is woman? What is a child? What is sleep? To our blindness, these things seem unaffecting. We make fables to hide the baldness of the fact and conform it, as we say, to the higher law of the mind. But when the fact is seen under the light of an idea, the gaudy fable fades and shrivels. We behold the real higher law. To the wise,

7. Hohenlohe . . . Shakers—Alexander Leopold Franz Emmerich, Prince of Hohenlohe-Waldenburg-Schillingsfurst (1794-1849), a reputed miracle-worker. The Shakers were a contemporary religious sect, who danced as a mode of worship. 8. Animal Magnetism—a theory of hypnosis propounded by Franz Anton Mesmer (1733-1815), who held that there was a vital magnetic fluid stored in the body, through which one person could act upon another. There was a contemporary revival of interest in this theory in the United States when Emerson was writing. 14-15. *vespertina cognitio* . . . *matutina cognitio*—Cf. Concord edition, Vol. I, pp. 413-14. 19. opaque—opaque. 24. Deep calls—Cf. Ps. 42: 7.

therefore, a fact is true poetry, and the most beautiful of fables. These wonders are brought to our own door. You also are a man. Man and woman and their social life, poverty, labor, sleep, fear, fortune, are known to you. Learn that none of these things is superficial, but that each phenomenon has its roots in the  
 5 faculties and affections of the mind. Whilst the abstract question occupies your intellect, nature brings it in the concrete to be solved by your hands. It were a wise inquiry for the closet, to compare, point by point, especially at remarkable crises in life, our daily history with the rise and progress of ideas in the mind.

So shall we come to look at the world with new eyes. It shall answer the  
 10 endless inquiry of the intellect,—What is truth? and of the affections,—What is good? by yielding itself passive to the educated Will. Then shall come to pass what my poet said; 'Nature is not fixed but fluid. Spirit alters, moulds, makes it. The immobility or bruteness of nature, is the absence of spirit; to pure spirit, it is fluid, it is volatile, it is obedient. Every spirit builds itself a house; and  
 15 beyond its house a world; and beyond its world, a heaven. Know then, that the world exists for you. For you is the phenomenon perfect. What we are, that only can we see. All that Adam had, all that Caesar could, you have and can do. Adam called his house, heaven and earth; Caesar called his house, Rome; you perhaps call yours, a cobbler's trade; a hundred acres of ploughed  
 20 land; or a scholar's garret. Yet line for line and point for point, your dominion is as great as theirs, though without fine names. Build, therefore, your own world. As fast as you conform your life to the pure idea in your mind, that will unfold its great proportions. A correspondent revolution in things will attend the influx of the spirit. So fast will disagreeable appearances, swine,  
 25 spiders, snakes, pests, mad-houses, prisons, enemies, vanish; they are temporary and shall be no more seen. The sordor and filths of nature, the sun shall dry up, and the wind exhale. As when the summer comes from the south; the snow-banks melt, and the face of the earth becomes green before it, so shall the advancing spirit create its ornaments along its path, and carry with it the beauty  
 30 it visits and the song which enchants it; it shall draw beautiful faces, warm hearts, wise discourse, and heroic acts, around its way, until evil is no more seen. The kingdom of man over nature, which cometh not with observation,—a dominion such as now is beyond his dream of God,—he shall enter without more wonder than the blind man feels who is gradually restored to perfect  
 35 sight.'

## THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

In August, 1837, Emerson delivered before the "president and gentlemen" of the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Harvard College the address which Oliver Wendell Holmes described as "our intellectual Declaration of Independence . . . the young men went out from it as if a prophet had been proclaiming to them, 'Thus saith the Lord!'" The address was published as a pamphlet in 1837; republished in 1838; and published again in England in 1844 as *Man Thinking*. The present text is from the volume of 1849, which also contains the revised form of *Nature*. Here, as in the case of other writings by Emerson, the *Complete Works* reprints the prose except for

26. sordor—filth, sordidness.

"revisions in punctuation and correction of obvious mistakes," but the 1849 text, being the last text which Emerson supervised, is to be preferred: the very eccentricities of the punctuation bring us nearer to the sound of the speaker's voice.

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN,

I greet you on the re-commencement of our literary year. Our anniversary is one of hope, and, perhaps, not enough of labor. We do not meet for games, of strength or skill, for the recitation of histories, tragedies, and <sup>Pæan recitation</sup> odes, like the ancient Greeks; for parliaments of love and poesy, like the Troubadours; nor 5 for the advancement of science, like our co-temporaries in the British and European capitals. Thus far, our holiday has been simply a friendly sign of the survival of the love of letters amongst a people too busy to give to letters any more. As such, it is precious as the sign of an indestructible instinct. Perhaps the time is already come, when it ought to be, and will be, something else; 10 when the sluggish intellect of this continent will look from under its iron lids, and fill the postponed expectation of the world with something better than the exertions of mechanical skill. Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close. The millions, that around us are rushing into life, cannot always be fed on the <sup>dry up</sup> ~~scarcely~~ remains of foreign 15 harvests. Events, actions arise, that must be sung, that will sing themselves. Who can doubt, that poetry will revive and lead in a new age, as the star in the constellation Harp, which now flames in our zenith, astronomers announce, shall one day be the pole-star for a thousand years?

In this hope I accept the topic which not only usage, but the nature of our association, seem to prescribe to this day,—the AMERICAN SCHOLAR. Year by year, we come up hither to read one more chapter of his biography. Let us inquire what light new days and events have thrown on his character and his hopes. 20

It is one of those fables which, out of an unknown <sup>quality of access and out</sup> antiquity, convey an unlooked-for wisdom, that the gods, in the beginning, divided Man into men, 25 that he might be more helpful to himself; just as the hand was divided into fingers, the better to answer its end.

The old fable covers a doctrine ever new and sublime; that there is One Man,—present to all particular men only partially, or through one faculty; and that you must take the whole society to find the whole man. Man is not a 30 farmer, or a professor, or an engineer, but he is all. Man is priest, and scholar, and statesman, and producer, and soldier. In the *divided* or social state, these functions are parcelled out to individuals, each of whom aims to do his stint of the joint work, whilst each other performs his. The fable implies, that the individual, to possess himself, must sometimes return from his own labor to 35 embrace all the other laborers. But unfortunately, this original unit, this

2. **re-commencement**—The college year formerly began in August. Emerson had entered Harvard just twenty years before. 3. **games**—the Olympic Games, the Dionysiac festivals, and similar contests among the classic Greeks. 5. **Troubadours**—medieval poets in southern France (1100-1400), who met in poetic contests and sang of love and chivalry. 6. **advancement**—The reference is to the British Association for the Advancement of Science. 17-18. **star . . . Harp**—The reference is to a star in the constellation Lyra, toward which the solar system is supposed to be advancing. 24. **fables**—The fable in question is found in Plato's *Symposium*, but the editors of the Concord edition call attention to a sentence in Plutarch's *Moralia* conveying the same idea.

fountain of power, has been so distributed to multitudes, has been so minutely subdivided and peddled out, that it is spilled into drops, and cannot be gathered. The state of society is one in which the members have suffered amputation from the trunk, and strut about so many walking monsters,—a good  
5 finger, a neck, a stomach, an elbow, but never a man.

Man is thus metamorphosed into a thing, into many things. The planter, who is Man sent out into the field to gather food, is seldom cheered by any idea of the true dignity of his ministry. He sees his bushel and his cart, and nothing beyond, and sinks into the farmer, instead of Man on the farm. The tradesman  
10 scarcely ever gives an ideal worth to his work, but is ridden by the routine of his craft, and the soul is subject to dollars. The priest becomes a form; the attorney, a statute-book; the mechanic, a machine; the sailor, a rope of a ship.

In this distribution of functions, the scholar is the delegated intellect. In the right state, he is *Man Thinking*. In the degenerate state, when the victim of  
15 society, he tends to become a mere thinker, or, still worse, the parrot of other men's thinking.

In this view of him, as Man Thinking, the theory of his office is contained. Him nature solicits with all her <sup>placid</sup> ~~placid~~, all her <sup>calm</sup> ~~monitory~~ pictures; him the past instructs; him the future invites. Is not, indeed, every man a student, and do not  
20 all things exist for the student's behoof? And, finally, is not the true scholar the only true master? But the old oracle said, 'All things have two handles: beware of the wrong one.' In life, too often, the scholar errs with mankind and forfeits his privilege. Let us see him in his school, and consider him in reference to the main influences he receives.

25 I. The first in time and the first in importance of the influences upon the mind is that of <sup>nature</sup> ~~nature~~. Every day, the sun; and, after sunset, night and her stars. Ever the winds blow; ever the grass grows. Every day, men and women, conversing, beholding and beholden. The scholar is he of all men whom this spectacle most engages. He must settle its value in his mind. What is nature to  
30 him? There is never a beginning, there is never an end, to the inexplicable continuity of this web of God, but always circular power returning into itself. Therein it resembles his own spirit, whose beginning, whose ending, he never can find,—so entire, so boundless. Far, too, as her splendors shine, system on system shooting like rays, upward, downward, without centre, without circum-  
35 ference,—in the mass and in the particle, nature hastens to render account of herself to the mind. Classification begins. To the young mind, every thing is individual, stands by itself. By and by, it finds how to join two things, and see in them one nature; then three, then three thousand; and so, tyrannized over by its own unifying instinct, it goes on tying things together, diminishing  
40 anomalies, discovering roots running under ground, whereby contrary and remote things cohere, and flower out from one stem. It presently learns, that since the dawn of history, there has been a constant accumulation and classifying of facts. But what is classification but the perceiving that these objects are not chaotic, and are not foreign, but have a law which is also a law of the human

6. planter—farmer. 8. ministry—calling, vocation.

mind? The astronomer discovers that geometry, a pure abstraction of the human mind, is the measure of planetary motion. The chemist finds proportions and intelligible method throughout matter; and science is nothing but the finding of analogy, identity, in the most remote parts. The ambitious soul sits down before each refractory fact; one after another, reduces all strange constitutions, all new powers, to their class and their law, and goes on for ever to animate the last fibre of organization, the outskirts of nature, by insight. 5

Thus to him, to this school-boy under the bending dome of day, is suggested, that he and it proceed from one root; one is leaf and one is flower; relation, sympathy, stirring in every vein. And what is that Root? Is not that the soul of his soul?—A thought too bold,—a dream too wild. Yet when this spiritual light shall have revealed the law of more earthly natures,—when he has learned to worship the soul, and to see that the natural philosophy that now is, is only the first gropings of its gigantic hand, he shall look forward to an ever expanding knowledge as to a becoming creator. He shall see, that nature is the opposite of the soul, answering to it part for part. One is seal, and one is print. Its beauty is the beauty of his own mind. Its laws are the laws of his own mind. Nature then becomes to him the measure of his attainments. So much of nature as he is ignorant of, so much of his own mind does he not yet possess. And, in fine, the ancient precept, “Know thyself,” and the modern precept, “Study nature,” become at last one maxim. 10 15 20

II. The next great influence into the spirit of the scholar, is, the mind of the Past,—in whatever form, whether of literature, of art, of institutions, that mind is inscribed. Books are the best type of the influence of the past, and perhaps we shall get at the truth,—learn the amount of this influence more conveniently, —by considering their value alone. 25

The theory of books is noble. The scholar of the first age received into him the world around; brooded thereon; gave it the new arrangement of his own mind, and uttered it again. It came into him, life; it went out from him, truth. It came to him, short-lived actions; it went out from him, immortal thoughts. It came to him, business; it went from him, poetry. It was dead fact; now, it is quick thought. It can stand, and it can go. It now endures, it now flies, it now inspires. Precisely in proportion to the depth of mind from which it issued, so high does it soar, so long does it sing. 30

Or, I might say, it depends on how far the process had gone, of transmuting life into truth. In proportion to the completeness of the distillation, so will the purity and imperishableness of the product be. But none is quite perfect. As no air-pump can by any means make a perfect vacuum, so neither can any artist entirely exclude the conventional, the local, the perishable from his book, or write a book of pure thought, that shall be as efficient, in all respects, to a remote posterity, as to cotemporaries, or rather to the second age. Each age, it is found, must write its own books; or rather, each generation for the next succeeding. The books of an older period will not fit this. 35 40

Yet hence arises a grave mischief. The sacredness which attaches to the act

2. **planetary motion**—The reference is to the fact that the radius vector of the several planets sweeps over equal areas in equal times. 22. **influence**—here used in its Latin sense of “flowing into.”

of creation,—the act of thought,—is transferred to the record. The poet chanting, was felt to be a divine man: henceforth the chant is divine also. The writer was a just and wise spirit: henceforward it is settled, the book is perfect; as love of the hero corrupts into worship of his statue. Instantly, the book becomes  
 5 noxious: the guide is a tyrant. The sluggish and perverted mind of the multitude, slow to open to the incursions of Reason, having once so opened, having once received this book, stands upon it, and makes an outcry, if it is disparaged. Colleges are built on it. Books are written on it by thinkers, not by Man Thinking; by men of talent, that is, who start wrong, who set out from accepted  
 10 dogmas, not from their own sight of principles. Meek young men grow up in libraries, believing it their duty to accept the views which Cicero, which Locke, which Bacon, have given, forgetful that Cicero, Locke, and Bacon were only young men in libraries, when they wrote these books.

Hence, instead of Man Thinking, we have the bookworm. Hence, the book-  
 15 learned class, who value books, as such; not as related to nature and the human constitution, but as making a sort of Third Estate with the world and the soul. Hence, the restorers of readings, the <sup>chambers</sup> emendators, the bibliomaniacs of all degrees.

Books are the best of things, well used; abused, among the worst. What is the  
 20 right use? What is the one end which all means go to effect? They are for nothing but to inspire. I had better never see a book, than to be warped by its attraction clean out of my own orbit, and made a satellite instead of a system. The one thing in the world, of value, is the active soul. This every man is entitled to; this every man contains within him, although, in almost all men,  
 25 obstructed, and as yet unborn. The soul active sees absolute truth; and utters truth, or creates. In this action, it is genius; not the privilege of here and there a favorite, but the sound estate of every man. In its essence, it is progressive. The book, the college, the school of art, the institution of any kind, stop with some past utterance of genius. This is good, say they,—let us hold by this.  
 30 They pin me down. They look backward and not forward. But genius looks forward: the eyes of man are set in his forehead, not in his hind-head: man hopes: genius creates. Whatever talents may be, if the man create not, the pure efflux of the Deity is not his;—cinders and smoke there may be, but not yet flame. There are creative manners, there are creative actions, and creative words;  
 35 manners, actions, words, that is, indicative of no custom or authority, but springing spontaneous from the mind's own sense of good and fair.

On the other part, instead of being its own seer, let it receive from another mind its truth, though it were in torrents of light, without periods of solitude, inquest, and self-recovery, and a fatal disservice is done. Genius is always  
 40 sufficiently the enemy of genius by over influence. The literature of every nation bears me witness. The English dramatic poets have Shakspearized now for two hundred years.

11. Cicero . . . Locke—Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 B.C.), here cited as an essayist and philosopher; John Locke (1632-1704), whose philosophical writings were dominant in the eighteenth century. 12. Bacon—Francis Bacon (1561-1626), proponent of the inductive philosophy. 16. Third Estate—In monarchical France there were three "estates" or divisions of the people, the Third Estate being the common people. The phrase became important during the French Revolution. 33. efflux—flowing out.

Undoubtedly there is a right way of reading, so it be sternly subordinated. Man Thinking must not be subdued by his instruments. Books are for the scholar's idle times. When he can read God directly, the hour is too precious to be wasted in other men's transcripts of their readings. But when the intervals of darkness come, as come they must,—when the sun is hid and the stars withdraw their shining,—we repair to the lamps which were kindled by their ray, to guide our steps to the East again, where the dawn is. We hear, that we may speak. The Arabian proverb says, "A fig tree, looking on a fig tree, becometh fruitful."

It is remarkable, the character of the pleasure we derive from the best books. They impress us with the conviction, that one nature wrote and the same reads. We read the verses of one of the great English poets, of Chaucer, of Marvell, of Dryden, with the most modern joy,—with a pleasure, I mean, which is in great part caused by the abstraction of all *time* from their verses. There is some awe mixed with the joy of our surprise, when this poet, who lived in some past world, two or three hundred years ago, says that which lies close to my own soul, that which I also had well nigh thought and said. But for the evidence thence afforded to the philosophical doctrine of the identity of all minds, we should suppose some preëstablished harmony, some foresight of souls that were to be, and some preparation of stores for their future wants, like the fact observed in insects, who lay up food before death for the young grub they shall never see.

I would not be hurried by any love of system, by any exaggeration of instincts, to underrate the Book. We all know, that, as the human body can be nourished on any food, though it were boiled grass and the broth of shoes, so the human mind can be fed by any knowledge. And great and heroic men have existed, who had almost no other information than by the printed page. I only would say that it needs a strong head to bear that diet. One must be an inventor to read well. As the proverb says, "He that would bring home the wealth of the Indies, must carry out the wealth of the Indies." There is then creative reading as well as creative writing. When the mind is braced by labor and invention, the page of whatever book we read becomes luminous with manifold allusion. Every sentence is doubly significant, and the sense of our author is as broad as the world. We then see, what is always true, that, as the seer's hour of vision is short and rare among heavy days and months, so is its record, perchance, the least part of his volume. The discerning will read, in his Plato or Shakspeare, only that least part,—only the authentic utterances of the oracle;—all the rest he rejects, were it never so many times Plato's and Shakspeare's.

Of course, there is a portion of reading quite indispensable to a wise man. History and exact science he must learn by laborious reading. Colleges, in like manner, have their indispensable office,—to teach elements. But they can only highly serve us, when they aim not to drill, but to create; when they gather from far every ray of various genius to their hospitable halls, and by the concentrated fires, set the hearts of their youth on flame. Thought and knowledge

12-13. Chaucer . . . Dryden.—The names are familiar except for Andrew Marvell (1621-1678), English poet and satirist. 29. "He that . . ."—*Cf. Journals*, Vol. IV, p. 254.



are natures in which apparatus and pretension avail nothing. Gowns, and pecuniary foundations, though of towns of gold, can never countervail the least sentence or syllable of wit. Forget this, and our American colleges will recede in their public importance, whilst they grow richer every year.

- 5 <sup>well</sup> III. There goes in the world a notion, that the scholar should be a recluse, a valetudinarian,—as unfit for any handiwork or public labor as a penknife for an axe. The so-called ‘practical men’ sneer at speculative men, as if, because they speculate or *see*, they could do nothing. I have heard it said that the clergy,—who are always, more universally than any other class, the scholars  
10 of their day,—are addressed as women; that the rough, spontaneous conversation of men they do not hear, but only a mincing and diluted speech. They are often virtually disfranchised; and, indeed, there are advocates for their celibacy. As far as this is true of the studious classes, it is not just and wise. Action is with the scholar subordinate, but it is essential. Without it, he is not yet man.  
15 Without it, thought can never ripen into truth. Whilst the world hangs before the eye as a cloud of beauty, we cannot even see its beauty. Inaction is cowardice, but there can be no scholar without the heroic mind. The preamble of thought, the transition through which it passes from the unconscious to the conscious, is action. Only so much do I know, as I have lived. Instantly we  
20 know whose words are loaded with life, and whose not.

The world,—this shadow of the soul, or *other me*, lies wide around. Its attractions are the keys which unlock my thoughts and make me acquainted with myself. I run eagerly into this resounding tumult. I grasp the hands of those next me, and take my place in the ring to suffer and to work, taught by an instinct, that so shall the dumb abyss be vocal with speech. I pierce its order;  
25 I dissipate its fear; I dispose of it within the circuit of my expanding life. So much only of life as I know by experience, so much of the wilderness have I vanquished and planted, or so far have I extended my being, my dominion. I do not see how any man can afford, for the sake of his nerves and his nap, to  
30 spare any action in which he can partake. It is pearls and rubies to his discourse. Drudgery, calamity, exasperation, want, are instructors in eloquence and wisdom. The true scholar grudges every opportunity of action past by, as a loss of power.

- It is the raw material out of which the intellect moulds her splendid products.  
35 A strange process too, this, by which experience is converted into thought, as a mulberry leaf is converted into satin. The manufacture goes forward at all hours.

The actions and events of our childhood and youth, are now matters of calmest observation. They lie like fair pictures in the air. Not so with our recent actions,—with the business which we now have in hand. On this we are  
40 quite unable to speculate. Our affections as yet circulate through it. We no more feel or know it, than we feel the feet, or the hand, or the brain of our body. The new deed is yet a part of life,—remains for a time immersed in our unconscious life. In some contemplative hour, it detaches itself from the life

1. **Gowns**—the academic cap and gown as a symbol of endowed fellowships or professorships.  
3. **wit**—wisdom. 36. **mulberry leaf**—on which silkworms are fed.

like a ripe fruit, to become a thought of the mind. Instantly it is raised, trans-  
 figured; the corruptible has put on incorruption. Henceforth it is an object of  
 beauty, however base its origin and neighborhood. Observe, too, the impossi-  
 bility of antedating this act. In its grub state, it cannot fly, it cannot shine, it is a  
 dull grub. But suddenly, without observation, the selfsame thing unfurls beauti-  
 ful wings, and is an angel of wisdom. So is there no fact, no event, in our  
 private history, which shall not, sooner or later, lose its adhesive, inert form,  
 and astonish us by soaring from our body into the empyrean. Cradle and in-  
 fancy, school and playground, the fear of boys, and dogs, and ferules, the love  
 of little maids and berries, and many another fact that once filled the whole  
 sky, are gone already; friend and relative, profession and party, town and  
 country, nation and world, must also soar and sing.

Of course, he who has put forth his total strength in fit actions, has the  
 richest return of wisdom. I will not shut myself out of this globe of action,  
 and transplant an oak into a flower-pot, there to hunger and pine; nor trust the  
 revenue of some single faculty, and exhaust one vein of thought, much like  
 those Savoyards, who, getting their livelihood by carving shepherds, shepherd-  
 esses, and smoking Dutchmen, for all Europe, went out one day to the moun-  
 tain to find stock, and discovered that they had whittled up the last of their pine-  
 trees. Authors we have, in numbers, who have written out their vein, and who,  
 moved by a commendable prudence, sail for Greece or Palestine, follow  
 the trapper into the prairie, or ramble round Algiers, to replenish their  
 merchantable stock.

If it were only for a vocabulary, the scholar would be covetous of action.  
 Life is our dictionary. Years are well spent in country labors; in town,—in the  
 insight into trades and manufactures; in frank intercourse with many men and  
 women; in science; in art; to the one end of mastering in all their facts a  
 language by which to illustrate and embody our perceptions. I learn immedi-  
 ately from any speaker how much he has already lived, through the poverty or  
 the splendor of his speech. Life lies behind us as the quarry from whence we  
 get tiles and copestones for the masonry of to-day. This is the way to learn  
 grammar. Colleges and books only copy the language which the field and the  
 work-yard made.

But the final value of action, like that of books, and better than books, is,  
 that it is a resource. That great principle of Undulation in nature, that shows  
 itself in the inspiring and expiring of the breath; in desire and satiety; in the  
 ebb and flow of the sea; in day and night; in heat and cold; and, as yet more  
 deeply ingrained in every atom and every fluid, is known to us under the  
 name of Polarity,—these “fits of easy transmission and reflection,” as Newton  
 called them, are the law of nature because they are the law of spirit.

The mind now thinks; now acts; and each fit reproduces the other. When  
 the artist has exhausted his materials, when the fancy no longer paints, when  
 thoughts are no longer apprehended and books are a weariness,—he has always

2. corruptible—Cf. I Cor. 15: 53. 15. oak . . . flower-pot—a reminiscence of the com-  
 parison of Hamlet to an oak tree in a costly vase, in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*. 17. Savoyards—  
 inhabitants of Savoy. 39. “fits . . . reflection”—A phrase used by Sir Isaac Newton in his  
*Opticks* (1704), Bk. III. See propositions XI, XII, XIII.

the resource *to live*. Character is higher than intellect. Thinking is the function. Living is the functionary. The stream retreats to its source. A great soul will be strong to live, as well as strong to think. Does he lack organ or medium to impart his truths? He can still fall back on this elemental force of living them.

- 5 This is a total act. Thinking is a partial act. Let the grandeur of justice shine in his affairs. Let the beauty of affection cheer his lowly roof. Those 'far from fame,' who dwell and act with him, will feel the force of his constitution in the doings and passages of the day better than it can be measured by any public and designed display. Time shall teach him, that the scholar loses no  
10 hour which the man lives. Herein he unfolds the sacred germ of his instinct, screened from influence. What is lost in seemliness is gained in strength. Not out of those, on whom systems of education have exhausted their culture, comes the helpful giant to destroy the old or to build the new, but out of unhand-selled savage nature, out of terrible Druids and Berserkirs come at last Alfred  
15 and Shakspeare.

- I hear therefore with joy whatever is beginning to be said of the dignity and necessity of labor to every citizen. There is virtue yet in the hoe and the spade, for learned as well as for unlearned hands. And labor is everywhere welcome; always we are invited to work; only be this limitation observed, that a man  
20 shall not for the sake of wider activity sacrifice any opinion to the popular judgments and modes of action.

I have now spoken of the education of the scholar by nature, by books, and by action. It remains to say somewhat of his duties.

- They are such as become Man Thinking. They may all be comprised in  
25 self-trust. The office of the scholar is to cheer, to raise, and to guide men by showing them facts amidst appearances. He plies the slow, unhonored, and unpaid task of observation. Flamsteed and Herschel, in their glazed observatories, may catalogue the stars with the praise of all men, and, the results being splendid and useful, honor is sure. But he, in his private observatory,  
30 cataloguing obscure and nebulous stars of the human mind, which as yet no man has thought of as such,—watching days and months, sometimes, for a few facts; correcting still his old records;—must relinquish display and immediate fame. In the long period of his preparation, he must betray often an ignorance and shiftlessness in popular arts, incurring the disdain of the able who shoulder  
35 him aside. Long he must stammer in his speech; often forego the living for the dead. Worse yet, he must accept,—how often! poverty and solitude. For the ease and pleasure of treading the old road, accepting the fashions, the education, the religion of society, he takes the cross of making his own, and, of course, the self-accusation, the faint heart, the frequent uncertainty and loss  
40 of time, which are the nettles and tangling vines in the way of the self-relying

13. *unhandselled*—ungifted. 14. *Druids . . . Berserkirs*—The Druids were Celtic priests; the Berserkers, hard-fighting Norse warriors. Emerson has in mind the Celtic and Norman strains in the British nation. 18. *labor*—The Brook Farm experiment was a practical comment on this passage. 27. *Flamsteed and Herschel*—John Flamsteed (1646-1719), British astronomer, for whom the Greenwich observatory was built. Emerson has probably in mind Sir Frederick William Herschel (1738-1822), though other members of the Herschel family were famous astronomers as well.

and self-directed; and the state of virtual hostility in which he seems to stand to society, and especially to educated society. For all this loss and scorn, what offset? He is to find consolation in exercising the highest functions of human nature. He is one, who raises himself from private considerations, and breathes and lives on public and illustrious thoughts. He is the world's eye. He is the world's heart. He is to resist the vulgar prosperity that retrogrades ever to barbarism, by preserving and communicating heroic sentiments, noble biographies, melodious verse, and the conclusions of history. Whatsoever oracles the human heart, in all emergencies, in all solemn hours, has uttered as its commentary on the world of actions,—these he shall receive and impart. And whatsoever new verdict Reason from her inviolable seat pronounces on the passing men and events of to-day,—this he shall hear and promulgate.

These being his functions, it becomes him to feel all confidence in himself, and to defer never to the popular cry. He and he only knows the world. The world of any moment is the merest appearance. Some great decorum, some fetish of a government, some ephemeral trade, or war, or man, is cried up by half mankind and cried down by the other half, as if all depended on this particular up or down. The odds are that the whole question is not worth the poorest thought which the scholar has lost in listening to the controversy. Let him not quit his belief that a popgun is a popgun, though the ancient and honorable of the earth affirm it to be the crack of doom. In silence, in steadiness, in severe abstraction, let him hold by himself; add observation to observation, patient of neglect, patient of reproach, and bide his own time,—happy enough, if he can satisfy himself alone, that this day he has seen something truly. Success treads on every right step. For the instinct is sure, that prompts him to tell his brother what he thinks. He then learns, that in going down into the secrets of his own mind, he has descended into the secrets of all minds. He learns that he who has mastered any law in his private thoughts, is master to that extent of all men whose language he speaks, and of all into whose language his own can be translated. The poet, in utter solitude remembering his spontaneous thoughts and recording them, is found to have recorded that, which men in crowded cities find true for them also. The orator distrusts at first the fitness of his frank confessions,—his want of knowledge of the persons he addresses,—until he finds that he is the complement of his hearers;—that they drink his words because he fulfils for them their own nature; the deeper he dives into his privatest, secretest presentiment, to his wonder he finds, this is the most acceptable, most public, and universally true. The people delight in it; the better part of every man feels, This is my music; this is myself.

In self-trust, all the virtues are comprehended. Free should the scholar be,—free and brave. Free even to the definition of freedom, “without any hindrance that does not arise out of his own constitution.” Brave; for fear is a thing, which a scholar by his very function puts behind him. Fear always springs from ignorance. It is a shame to him if his tranquillity, amid dangerous times, arise from the presumption that, like children and women, his is a protected class; or if he seek a temporary peace by the diversion of his thoughts from politics or vexed questions, hiding his head like an ostrich in the flowering bushes, peeping into microscopes, and turning rhymes, as a boy whistles to keep his courage

- up. So is the danger a danger still; so is the fear worse. Manlike let him turn and face it. Let him look into its eye and search its nature, inspect its origin,—see the whelping of this lion,—which lies no great way back; he will then find in himself a perfect comprehension of its nature and extent; he will have made
- 5 his hands meet on the other side, and can henceforth defy it, and pass on superior. The world is his, who can see through its pretension. What deafness, what stone-blind custom, what overgrown error you behold, is there only by sufferance,—by your sufferance. See it to be a lie, and you have already dealt it its mortal blow.
- 10 Yes, we are the cowed,—we the trustless. It is a mischievous notion that we are come late into nature; that the world was finished a long time ago. As the world was plastic and fluid in the hands of God, so it is ever to so much of his attributes as we bring to it. To ignorance and sin, it is flint. They adapt themselves to it as they may; but in proportion as a man has any thing in him divine,
- 15 the firmament flows before him and takes his signet and form. Not he is great who can alter matter, but he who can alter my state of mind. They are the kings of the world who give the color of their present thought to all nature and all art, and persuade men by the cheerful serenity of their carrying the matter, that this thing which they do, is the apple which the ages have desired
- 20 to pluck, now at last ripe, and inviting nations to the harvest. The great man makes the great thing. Wherever Macdonald sits, there is the head of the table. Linnaeus makes botany the most alluring of studies, and wins it from the farmer and the herb-woman; Davy, chemistry; and Cuvier, fossils. The day is always his who works in it with serenity and great aims. The unstable estimates
- 25 of men crowd to him whose mind is filled with a truth, as the heaped waves of the Atlantic follow the moon.
- For this self-trust, the reason is deeper than can be fathomed,—darker than can be enlightened. I might not carry with me the feeling of my audience in stating my own belief. But I have already shown the ground of my hope, in
- 30 adverting to the doctrine that man is one. I believe man has been wronged; he has wronged himself. He has almost lost the light, that can lead him back to his prerogatives. Men are become of no account. Men in history, men in the world of to-day, are bugs, are spawn, and are called 'the mass' and 'the herd.' In a century, in a millennium, one or two men; that is to say,—one or two
- 35 approximations to the right state of every man. All the rest behold in the hero or the poet their own green and crude being,—ripened; yes, and are content to be less, so *that* may attain to its full stature. What a testimony,—full of grandeur, full of pity, is borne to the demands of his own nature, by the poor clansman, the poor partisan, who rejoices in the glory of his chief. The poor
- 40 and the low find some amends to their immense moral capacity, for their acquiescence in a political and social inferiority. They are content to be brushed like flies from the path of a great person, so that justice shall be done by him to

21. **Macdonald**—This phrase, much modified from its original, apparently comes from a sentence uttered by Sancho Panza in *Don Quixote*, Pt. II, Chap. xxxi. 22. **Linnaeus**—See note 35, p. 404. 23. **Davy**—Sir Humphry Davy (1778-1829), English chemist. 23. **Cuvier**—Georges Léopold Chrétien Frédéric Dagobert, Baron de Cuvier (1759-1832), French scientist, founder of comparative anatomy, and famous as a paleontologist.

that common nature which it is the dearest desire of all to see enlarged and glorified. They sun themselves in the great man's light, and feel it to be their own element. They cast the dignity of man from their downtrodden selves upon the shoulders of a hero, and will perish to add one drop of blood to make that great heart beat, those giant sinews combat and conquer. He lives for us, and we live in him. 5

Men such as they are, very naturally seek money or power; and power because it is as good as money,—the “spoils,” so called, “of office.” And why not? for they aspire to the highest, and this, in their sleep-walking, they dream is highest. Wake them, and they shall quit the false good, and leap to the true, and leave governments to clerks and desks. This revolution is to be wrought by the gradual domestication of the idea of Culture. The main enterprise of the world for splendor, for extent, is the upbuilding of a man. Here are the materials strown along the ground. The private life of one man shall be a more illustrious monarchy,—more formidable to its enemy, more sweet and serene in its influence to its friend, than any kingdom in history. For a man, rightly viewed, comprehendeth the particular natures of all men. Each philosopher, each bard, each actor has only done for me, as by a delegate, what one day I can do for myself. The books which once we valued more than the apple of the eye, we have quite exhausted. What is that but saying, that we have come up with the point of view which the universal mind took through the eyes of one scribe; we have been that man, and have passed on. First, one; then, another; we drain all cisterns, and, waxing greater by all these supplies, we crave a better and more abundant food. The man has never lived that can feed us ever. The human mind cannot be enshrined in a person, who shall set a barrier on any one side to this unbounded, unboundable empire. It is one central fire, which, flaming now out of the lips of Etna, lightens the capes of Sicily; and, now out of the throat of Vesuvius, illuminates the towers and vineyards of Naples. It is one light which beams out of a thousand stars. It is one soul which animates all men. 30

But I have dwelt perhaps tediously upon this abstraction of the Scholar. I ought not to delay longer to add what I have to say, of nearer reference to the time and to this country.

Historically, there is thought to be a difference in the ideas which predominate over successive epochs, and there are data for marking the genius of the Classic, of the Romantic, and now of the Reflective or Philosophical age. With the views I have intimated of the oneness or the identity of the mind through all individuals, I do not much dwell on these differences. In fact, I believe each individual passes through all three. The boy is a Greek; the youth, romantic; the adult, reflective. I deny not, however, that a revolution in the leading idea may be distinctly enough traced. 40

Our age is bewailed as the age of Introversion. Must that needs be evil? We, it seems, are critical; we are embarrassed with second thoughts; we cannot enjoy any thing for hankering to know whereof the pleasure consists; we

8. **spoils of office**—the giving of offices as political patronage. The practice was especially notorious in Jackson's administrations.

are lined with eyes; we see with our feet; the time is infected with Hamlet's unhappiness,—

"Sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought."

It is so bad then? Sight is the last thing to be pitied. Would we be blind? Do we fear lest we should outsee nature and God, and drink truth dry? I look upon the discontent of the literary class, as a mere announcement of the fact, that they find themselves not in the state of mind of their fathers, and regret the coming state as untried; as a boy dreads the water before he has learned that he can swim. If there is any period one would desire to be born in,—is it not the age of Revolution; when the old and the new stand side by side, and admit of being compared; when the energies of all men are searched by fear and by hope; when the historic glories of the old, can be compensated by the rich possibilities of the new era? This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it.

I read with some joy of the auspicious signs of the coming days, as they glimmer already through poetry and art, through philosophy and science, through church and state.

One of these signs is the fact, that the same movement which effected the elevation of what was called the lowest class in the state, assumed in literature a very marked and as benign an aspect. Instead of the sublime and beautiful; the near, the low, the common, was explored and poetized. That, which had been negligently trodden under foot by those who were harnessing and provisioning themselves for long journeys into far countries, is suddenly found to be richer than all foreign parts. The literature of the poor, the feelings of the child, the philosophy of the street, the meaning of household life, are the topics of the time. It is a great stride. It is a sign—is it not? of new vigor when the extremities are made active, when currents of warm life run into the hands and the feet. I ask not for the great, the remote, the romantic; what is doing in Italy or Arabia; what is Greek art, or Provençal minstrelsy; I embrace the common, I explore and sit at the feet of the familiar, the low. Give me insight into to-day, and you may have the antique and future worlds. What would we really know the meaning of? The meal in the firkin; the milk in the pan; the ballad in the street; the news of the boat; the glance of the eye; the form and the gait of the body;—show me the ultimate reason of these matters; show me the sublime presence of the highest spiritual cause lurking, as always it does lurk, in these suburbs and extremities of nature; let me see every trifle bristling with the polarity that ranges it instantly on an eternal law; and the shop, the plough, and the le[d]ger, referred to the like cause by which light undulates and poets sing;—and the world lies no longer a dull miscellany and lumber-room, but has form and order; there is no trifle; there is no puzzle; but one design unites and animates the farthest pinnacle and the lowest trench.

This idea has inspired the genius of Goldsmith, Burns, Cowper, and, in a

3. "Sicklied . . . thought"—from *Hamlet*, Act III, scene 1. 29. Provençal minstrelsy—the lyric poetry of the troubadours. 32. firkin—small cask. 42. Goldsmith . . . Cowper—Goldsmith, Burns, and Cowper are here cited for their poems of common life like *The Deserted Village*, "The Jolly Beggars," and *The Task*.

newer time, of Goethe, Wordsworth, and Carlyle. This idea they have differently followed and with various success. In contrast with their writing, the style of Pope, of Johnson, of Gibbon, looks cold and pedantic. This writing is blood-warm. Man is surprised to find that things near are not less beautiful and wondrous than things remote. The near explains the far. The drop is a small ocean. A man is related to all nature. This perception of the worth of the vulgar is fruitful in discoveries. Goethe, in this very thing the most modern of the moderns, has shown us, as none ever did, the genius of the ancients. 5

There is one man of genius, who has done much for this philosophy of life, whose literary value has never yet been rightly estimated;—I mean Emanuel Swedenborg. The most imaginative of men, yet writing with the precision of a mathematician, he endeavored to engraft a purely philosophical Ethics on the popular Christianity of his time. Such an attempt, of course, must have difficulty, which no genius could surmount. But he saw and showed the connection between nature and the affections of the soul. He pierced the emblematic or spiritual character of the visible, audible, tangible world. Especially did his shade-loving muse hover over and interpret the lower parts of nature; he showed the mysterious bond that allies moral evil to the foul material forms, and has given in epical parables a theory of insanity, of beasts, of unclean and fearful things. 10 15 20

Another sign of our times, also marked by an analogous political movement, is the new importance given to the single person. Every thing that tends to insulate the individual,—to surround him with barriers of natural respect, so that each man shall feel the world is his, and man shall treat with man as a sovereign state with a sovereign state;—tends to true union as well as greatness. "I learned," said the melancholy Pestalozzi, "that no man in God's wide earth is either willing or able to help any other man." Help must come from the bosom alone. The scholar is that man who must take up into himself all the ability of the time, all the contributions of the past, all the hopes of the future. He must be an university of knowledges. If there be one lesson more than another, which should pierce his ear, it is, The world is nothing, the man is all; in yourself is the law of all nature, and you know not yet how a globule of sap ascends; in yourself slumbers the whole of Reason; it is for you to know all; it is for you to dare all. Mr. President and Gentlemen, this confidence in the unsearched might of man belongs, by all motives, by all prophecy, by all preparation, to the American Scholar. We have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe. The spirit of the American freeman is already suspected to be timid, imitative, tame. Public and private avarice make the air we breathe thick and fat. The scholar is decent, indolent, complaisant. See already the tragic consequence. The mind of this country, taught to aim at low objects, eats upon 25 30 35 40

1. Goethe . . . Carlyle—Emerson was profoundly influenced by Goethe, Wordsworth, and Carlyle, who agree in teaching a spiritual unity in nature and man. 3. Pope . . . Gibbon—Alexander Pope (1688-1744); Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), here cited for his polysyllabic prose, and Edward Gibbon (1737-1794), whose *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is written in a stately, self-conscious, though magnificent, style. 11. Swedenborg—See note 14, p. 407. Emerson included Swedenborg in his *Representative Men*. 26. Pestalozzi—Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827), Swiss educational reformer, who was discouraged by the failure of his attempts to change educational theory. Emerson was introduced to Pestalozzi's ideas by Bronson Alcott.



itself. There is no work for any but the decorous and the complaisant. Young men of the fairest promise, who begin life upon our shores, inflated by the mountain winds, shined upon by all the stars of God, find the earth below not in unison with these,—but are hindered from action by the disgust which the principles on which business is managed inspire, and turn drudges, or die of disgust,—some of them suicides. What is the remedy? They did not yet see, and thousands of young men as hopeful now crowding to the barriers for the career, do not yet see, that, if the single man plant himself indomitably on his instincts, and there abide, the huge world will come round to him. Patience,—  
 10 patience;—with the shades of all the good and great for company; and for solace, the perspective of your own infinite life; and for work, the study and the communication of principles, the making those instincts prevalent, the conversion of the world. Is it not the chief disgrace in the world, not to be an unit;—not to be reckoned one character;—not to yield that peculiar fruit which  
 15 each man was created to bear, but to be reckoned in the gross, in the hundred, or the thousand, of the party, the section, to which we belong; and our opinion predicted geographically, as the north, or the south? Not so, brothers and friends,—please God, ours shall not be so. We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds. The study of  
 20 letters shall be no longer a name for pity, for doubt, and for sensual indulgence. The dread of man and the love of man shall be a wall of defence and a wreath of joy around all. A nation of men will for the first time exist, because each believes himself inspired by the Divine Soul which also inspires all men.

## SELF-RELIANCE

First printed in the *Essays* of 1841. This text is from the revised edition of 1847. Emerson printed three mottoes to the first edition of the essay, omitting the third in the 1847 version. The mottoes are:

“Ne te quaesiveris extra” [Do not seek outside yourself]

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“Man is his own star, and the soul that can  
 Render an honest and a perfect man,  
 Command all light, all influence, all fate,  
 Nothing to him falls early, or too late.  
 Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,  
 Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.”

*Epilogue to Beaumont and Fletcher's  
 Honest Man's Fortune.*

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Cast the bantling on the rocks,  
 Suckle him with the she-wolf's teats:  
 Wintered with the hawk and fox,  
 Power and speed be hands and feet.

The third motto is Emerson's own, and also appears in the *Poems*.

**I** READ the other day some verses written by an eminent painter which were original and not conventional. The soul always hears an admonition in such lines, let the subject be what it may. The sentiment they instil is of more value than any thought they may contain. To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men,— 5  
 that is genius. Speak your latent conviction, and it shall be the universal sense; for the inmost in due time becomes the outmost,—and our first thought is rendered back to us by the trumpets of the Last Judgment. Familiar as the voice of the mind is to each, the highest merit we ascribe to Moses, Plato, and Milton is, that they set at naught books and traditions, and spoke not what men but 10  
 what they thought. A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the lustre of the firmament of bards and sages. Yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his. In every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts: they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty. Great works of art have 15  
 no more affecting lesson for us than this. They teach us to abide by our spontaneous impression with good-humored inflexibility then most when the whole cry of voices is on the other side. Else, to-morrow a stranger will say with masterly good sense precisely what we have thought and felt all the time, and we shall be forced to take with shame our own opinion from another. 20

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better for worse as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in 25  
 him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried. Not for nothing one face, one character, one fact, makes much impression on him, and another none. This sculpture in the memory is not without preëstablished harmony. The eye was placed where one ray should fall, that it might testify of that particular ray. We but half ex- 30  
 press ourselves, and are ashamed of that divine idea which each of us represents. It may be safely trusted as proportionate and of good issues, so it be faithfully imparted, but God will not have his work made manifest by cowards. A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise, shall give him no peace. It is a deliverance which does not deliver. In the attempt his genius deserts him; no muse 35  
 befriends; no invention, no hope.

Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves 40  
 childlike to the <sup>spirit</sup>genius of their age, betraying their perception that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest mind the same transcendent destiny; and not minors and invalids in a protected corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but guides, re- 45

1. verses . . . painter—The editors of the Concord edition suggest that these verses were by Washington Allston (1779-1843), painter, poet, and novelist. 41. genius—spirit.

deemers, and benefactors, obeying the Almighty effort, and advancing on Chaos and the Dark.

What pretty oracles nature yields us on this text, in the face and behaviour of children, babes, and even brutes! That divided and rebel mind, that distrust of a sentiment because our arithmetic has computed the strength and means opposed to our purpose, these have not. Their mind being whole, their eye is as yet unconquered, and when we look in their faces, we are disconcerted. Infancy conforms to nobody: all conform to it, so that one babe commonly makes four or five out of the adults who prattle and play to it. So God has armed youth and puberty and manhood no less with its own piquancy and charm, and made it enviable and gracious and its claims not to be put by, if it will stand by itself. Do not think the youth has no force, because he cannot speak to you and me. Hark! in the next room his voice is sufficiently clear and emphatic. It seems he knows how to speak to his contemporaries. Bashful or bold, then, he will know how to make us seniors very unnecessary.

The nonchalance of boys who are sure of a dinner, and would disdain as much as a lord to do or say aught to conciliate one, is the healthy attitude of human nature. A boy is in the parlour what the pit is in the playhouse; independent, irresponsible, looking out from his corner on such people and facts as pass by, he tries and sentences them on their merits, in the swift, summary ways of boys, as good, bad, interesting, silly, eloquent, troublesome. He cumbers himself never about consequences, about interests: he gives an independent, genuine verdict. You must court him: he does not court you. But the man is, as it were, clapped into jail by his consciousness. As soon as he has once acted or spoken with <sup>brilliance</sup> éclat, he is a committed person, watched by the sympathy or the hatred of hundreds, whose affections must now enter into this account. There is no Lethe for this. Ah, that he could pass again into his neutrality! Who can thus avoid all pledges, and having observed, observe again from the same unaffected, unbiased, unbribable, unaffrighted innocence, must always be formidable. He would utter opinions on all passing affairs, which being seen to be not private, but necessary, would sink like darts into the ear of men, and put them in fear.

These are the voices which we hear in solitude, but they grow faint and inaudible as we enter into the world. Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs.

Whoso would be a man, must be a nonconformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and you shall have the suffrage of the world. I remember an answer which when quite young I was prompted to make to a

18. pit—formerly that part of the theater below the stage and immediately behind the orchestra from the point of view of the actor, where the cheaper seats were. 25. éclat—usually éclat—brilliance. 27. Lethe—mythological river of forgetfulness. 41. palms—symbols of triumph.

valued adviser, who was wont to <sup>question repeatedly</sup> importune me with the dear old doctrines of the church. On my saying, What have I to do with the sacredness of traditions, if I live wholly from within? my friend suggested,—“But these impulses may be from below, not from above.” I replied, “They do not seem to me to be such; but if I am the Devil’s child, I will live then from the Devil.” No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution, the only wrong what is against it. A man is to carry himself in the presence of all opposition as if everything were titular and ephemeral but he. I am ashamed to think how easily we <sup>capitulate</sup> to badges and names, to large societies and dead institutions. Every decent and well-spoken individual affects and sways me more than is right. I ought to go upright and vital, and speak the rude truth in all ways. If malice and vanity wear the coat of philanthropy, shall that pass? If an angry bigot assumes this bountiful cause of Abolition, and comes to me with his last news from Barbadoes, why should I not say to him, ‘Go love thy infant; love thy wood-chopper; be good-natured and modest: have that grace; and never varnish your hard, uncharitable ambition with this incredible tenderness for black folk a thousand miles off. Thy love afar is spite at home.’ Rough and graceless would be such greeting, but truth is handsomer than the affectation of love. Your goodness must have some edge to it,—else it is none. The doctrine of hatred must be preached as the counteraction of the doctrine of love when that pules and whines. I shun father and mother and wife and brother, when my genius calls me. I would write on the lintels of the door-post, *Whim*. I hope it is somewhat better than whim at last, but we cannot spend the day in explanation. Expect me not to show cause why I seek or why I exclude company. Then, again, do not tell me, as a good man did to-day, of my obligation to put all poor men in good situations. Are they *my* poor? I tell thee, thou foolish philanthropist, that I grudge the dollar, the dime, the cent I give to such men as do not belong to me and to whom I do not belong. There is a class of persons to whom by all spiritual affinity I am bought and sold; for them I will go to prison, if need be; but your miscellaneous popular charities; the education at college of fools; the building of meeting-houses to the vain end to which many now stand; alms to sots; and the thousandfold Relief Societies;—though I confess with shame I sometimes succumb and give the dollar, it is a wicked dollar, which by and by I shall have the manhood to withhold.

Virtues are, in the popular estimate, rather the exception than the rule. There is the man *and* his virtues. Men do what is called a good action, as some piece of courage or charity, much as they would pay a fine in <sup>atonement</sup> expiation of daily non-appearance on parade. Their works are done as an apology or extenuation of their living in the world,—as invalids and the insane pay a high board. Their virtues are penances. I do not wish to expiate, but to live. My life is for itself and not for a spectacle. I much prefer that it should be of a lower strain, so it be genuine and equal, than that it should be glittering and unsteady. I wish it

9. titular—existing in name only. 15. news . . . Barbadoes—Slavery was officially abolished in Barbadoes in 1834. 22. father and mother—Cf. Matt. 10: 37. 23-24. lintels . . . door-post—vaguely reminiscent of Ex. 12: 7. The lintel is the crosspiece above a door.

to be sound and sweet, and not to need diet and bleeding. I ask primary evidence that you are a man, and refuse this appeal from the man to his actions. I know that for myself it makes no difference whether I do or forbear those actions which are reckoned excellent. I cannot consent to pay for a privilege  
 5 where I have intrinsic right. Few and mean as my gifts may be, I actually am, and do not need for my own assurance or the assurance of my fellows any secondary testimony.

What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder, because you will  
 10 always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

The objection to conforming to usages that have become dead to you is, that it scatters your force. It loses your time and blurs the impression of your character. If you maintain a dead church, contribute to a dead Bible-society, vote with a great party either for the government or against it, spread your  
 15 table like base housekeepers,—under all these screens I have difficulty to detect the precise man you are. And, of course, so much force is withdrawn from all your proper life. But do your work, and I shall know you. Do your work, and you shall reinforce yourself. A man must consider what a blind man's-buff is this game of conformity. If I know your sect, I anticipate your argument. I hear a preacher announce for his text and topic the expediency of one of the institu-  
 20 tions of his church. Do I not know beforehand that not possibly can he say a new and spontaneous word? Do I not know that, with all this ostentation of examining the grounds of the institution, he will do no such thing? Do I not know that he is pledged to himself not to look but at one side,—the permitted side, not as a man, but as a parish minister? He is a retained attorney, and these airs of the bench are the emptiest affectation. Well, most men have bound their eyes with one or another handkerchief, and attached themselves to some one of these communities of opinion. This conformity makes them not false in a few particulars, authors of a few lies, but false in all particulars. Their every truth is not quite true. Their two is not the real two, their four  
 25 not the real four; so that every word they say chagrins us, and we know not where to begin to set them right. Meantime nature is not slow to equip us in the prison-uniform of the party to which we adhere. We come to wear one cut of face and figure, and acquire by degrees the gentlest asinine expression. There is a mortifying experience in particular, which does not fail to wreak itself also  
 30 in the general history; I mean "the foolish face of praise," the forced smile which we put on in company where we do not feel at ease in answer to conversation which does not interest us. The muscles, not spontaneously moved, but moved by a low usurping wilfulness, grow tight about the outline of the face, with the most disagreeable sensation.

For nonconformity the world whips you with its displeasure. And therefore

40. "foolish . . . praise"—from line 212 of Pope's *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*.

a man must know how to estimate a sour face. The by-standers look askance on him in the public street or in the friend's parlour. If this aversion had its origin in contempt and resistance like his own, he might well go home with a sad countenance; but the sour faces of the multitude, like their sweet faces, have no deep cause, but are put on and off as the wind blows and a newspaper directs. Yet is the discontent of the multitude more formidable than that of the senate and the college. It is easy enough for a firm man who knows the world to brook the rage of the cultivated classes. Their rage is decorous and prudent, for they are timid as being very vulnerable themselves. But when to their feminine rage the indignation of the people is added, when the ignorant and the poor are aroused, when the unintelligent brute force that lies at the bottom of society is made to growl and mow, it needs the habit of magnanimity and religion to treat it godlike as a trifle of no concernment.

The other terror that scares us from self-trust is our consistency; a reverence for our past act or word, because the eyes of others have no other data for computing our orbit than our past acts, and we are loth to disappoint them.

But why should you keep your head over your shoulder? Why drag about this corpse of your memory, lest you contradict somewhat you have stated in this or that public place? Suppose you should contradict yourself; what then? It seems to be a rule of wisdom never to rely on your memory alone, scarcely even in acts of pure memory, but to bring the past for judgment into the thousand-eyed present, and live ever in a new day. In your metaphysics you have denied personality to the Deity: yet when the devout motions of the soul come, yield to them heart and life, though they should clothe God with shape and color. Leave your theory, as Joseph his coat in the hand of the harlot, and flee.

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard words, and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict every thing you said to-day.—'Ah, so you shall be sure to be misunderstood.'—Is it so bad, then, to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood.

I suppose no man can violate his nature. All the sallies of his will are rounded in by the law of his being, as the inequalities of Andes and Himmaleh are insignificant in the curve of the sphere. Nor does it matter how you gauge and try him. A character is like an acrostic or Alexandrian stanza;—read it forward, backward, or across, it still spells the same thing. In this pleasing, contrite wood-life which God allows me, let me record day by day my honest thought without prospect or retrospect, and, I cannot doubt, it will be found sym-

12. mow—to make a grimace. 25. Joseph—Cf. Gen. 39:12. 32. Pythagoras—When Pythagoras sought to establish a school in Samos, his native island, the people would have none of it; and afterwards his followers were attacked in Crotona, whither he had gone. The controversies aroused by the other famous men named by Emerson are more familiar. 36. Himmaleh—Himalaya Mountains. 38. acrostic—a short poem in which the initials of the lines in an agreed-upon order, if read successively, form a name, phrase, or sentence. 38. Alexandrian stanza—a palindrome, or stanza which makes sense whether read backward or forward.

metrical, though I mean it not, and see it not. My book should smell of pines and resound with the hum of insects. The swallow over my window should interweave that thread or straw he carries in his bill into my web also. We pass for what we are. Character teaches above our wills. Men imagine that they  
 5 communicate their virtue or vice only by overt actions, and do not see that virtue or vice emit a breath every moment.

There will be an agreement in whatever variety of actions, so they be each honest and natural in their hour. For of one will, the actions will be harmonious, however unlike they seem. These varieties are lost sight of at a little distance, at a little height of thought. One tendency unites them all. The voyage  
 10 of the best ship is a zigzag line of a hundred tacks. See the line from a sufficient distance, and it straightens itself to the average tendency. Your genuine action will explain itself, and will explain your other genuine actions. Your conformity explains nothing. Act singly, and what you have already done singly will  
 15 justify you now. Greatness appeals to the future. If I can be firm enough to-day to do right, and scorn eyes, I must have done so much right before as to defend me now. Be it how it will, do right now. Always scorn appearances, and you always may. The force of character is cumulative. All the foregone days of virtue work their health into this. What makes the majesty of the heroes of  
 20 the senate and the field, which so fills the imagination? The consciousness of a train of great days and victories behind. They shed a united light on the advancing actor. He is attended as by a visible escort of angels. That is it which throws thunder into Chatham's voice, and dignity into Washington's port, and America into Adams's eye. Honor is venerable to us because it is no ephemeris.  
 25 It is always ancient virtue. We worship it to-day because it is not of to-day. We love it and pay it homage, because it is not a trap for our love and homage, but is self-dependent, self-derived, and therefore of an old immaculate pedigree, even if shown in a young person.

I hope in these days we have heard the last of conformity and consistency.  
 30 Let the words be gazetted and ridiculous henceforward. Instead of the gong for dinner, let us hear a whistle from the Spartan fife. Let us never bow and apologize more. A great man is coming to eat at my house. I do not wish to please him; I wish that he should wish to please me. I will stand here for humanity, and though I would make it kind, I would make it true. Let us affront  
 35 and reprimand the smooth mediocrity and squalid contentment of the times, and hurl in the face of custom, and trade, and office, the fact which is the upshot of all history, that there is a great responsible Thinker and Actor working wherever a man works; that a true man belongs to no other time or place, but is the centre of things. Where he is, there is nature. He measures you, and all  
 40 men, and all events. Ordinarily, every body in society reminds us of somewhat else, or of some other person. Character, reality, reminds you of nothing else; it takes place of the whole creation. The man must be so much, that he must make all circumstances indifferent. Every true man is a cause, a country, and

23. Chatham's—William Pitt, Earl of Chatham (1708-1778), the great orator. 23. port—demeanor, bearing. 24. Adams's—possibly John Adams (1735-1826), though Emerson may mean Samuel Adams (1722-1803), the Revolutionary patriot. 30. gazetted—that is, gazetted out: said of an officer whose resignation is announced in a gazette. 31. Spartan fife—the only music permitted the ancient Spartans.

an age; requires infinite spaces and numbers and time fully to accomplish his design;—and posterity seem to follow his steps as a train of clients. A man Caesar is born, and for ages after we have a Roman Empire. Christ is born, and millions of minds so grow and cleave to his genius that he is confounded with virtue and the possible of man. An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man; as, Monachism, of the Hermit Antony; the Reformation, of Luther; Quakerism, of Fox; Methodism, of Wesley; Abolition, of Clarkson. Scipio, Milton called “the height of Rome”; and all history resolves itself very easily into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons.

Let a man then know his worth, and keep things under his feet. Let him not peep or steal, or skulk up and down with the air of a charity-boy, a bastard, or an interloper, in the world which exists for him. But the man in the street, finding no worth in himself which corresponds to the force which built a tower or sculptured a marble god, feels poor when he looks on these. To him a palace, a statue, or a costly book have an alien and forbidding air, much like a gay equipage, and seem to say like that, ‘Who are you, Sir?’ Yet they all are his, suitors for his notice, petitioners to his faculties that they will come out and take possession. The picture waits for my verdict: it is not to command me, but I am to settle its claims to praise. That popular fable of the sot who was picked up dead drunk in the street, carried to the duke’s house, washed and dressed and laid in the duke’s bed, and, on his waking, treated with all obsequious ceremony like the duke, and assured that he had been insane, owes its popularity to the fact, that it symbolizes so well the state of man, who is in the world a sort of sot, but now and then wakes up, exercises his reason and finds himself a true prince.

Our reading is mendicant and sycophantic. In history, our imagination plays us false. Kingdom and lordship, power and estate, are a gaudier vocabulary than private John and Edward in a small house and common day’s work; but the things of life are the same to both; the sum total of both is the same. Why all this deference to Alfred, and Scanderbeg, and Gustavus? Suppose they were virtuous; did they wear out virtue? As great a stake depends on your private act to-day, as followed their public and renowned steps. When private men shall act with original views, the lustre will be transferred from the actions of kings to those of gentlemen.

The world has been instructed by its kings, who have so magnetized the eyes of nations. It has been taught by this colossal symbol the mutual reverence that is due from man to man. The joyful loyalty with which men have everywhere suffered the king, the noble, or the great proprietor to walk among them by a

3. **Caesar**—probably Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.), though Caius Julius Caesar Octavianus, known as Caesar Augustus (63 B.C.-14 A.D.), the first Roman Emperor, may be meant. 6. **Monachism**—monasticism. 6. **Antony**—Anthony (250-300?), the first Christian monk. 6. **Luther**—Martin Luther (1483-1546). 7. **Fox**—George Fox (1624-1691). 7. **Wesley**—John Wesley (1703-1791). 7. **Clarkson**—Thomas Clarkson (1760-1846), English philanthropist, and leading antislavery agitator. 7-8. **Scipio . . . Rome**—The reference is to *Paradise Lost*, Bk. IX, line 510. 19. **fable**—*Cf.* the Induction to *The Taming of the Shrew*. 30. **Alfred**—Alfred the Great, king of England (848?-901). 30. **Scanderbeg**—George Castriota (1403-1468), Albanian patriot opposed to the Turks, and known as Scanderbeg (Iskander Beg). 30. **Gustavus**—either Gustavus Vasa (1496-1560), or Gustavus Adolphus (1594-1632), both famous kings of Sweden. 35. **The world, etc.**—The student should compare with this portion of the essay Carlyle’s *Heroes and Hero-Worship*.



law of his own, make his own scale of men and things, and reverse theirs, pay for benefits not with money but with honor, and represent the law in his person, was the hieroglyphic by which they obscurely signified their consciousness of their own right and comeliness, the right of every man.

- 5 The magnetism which all original action exerts is explained when we inquire the reason of self-trust. Who is the Trustee? What is the aboriginal Self, on which a universal reliance may be grounded? What is the nature and power of that science-baffling star, without parallax, without calculable elements, which shoots a ray of beauty even into trivial and impure actions, if the least  
10 mark of independence appear? The inquiry leads us to that source, at once the essence of genius, of virtue, and of life, which we call Spontaneity or Instinct. We denote this primary wisdom as Intuition, whilst all later teachings are tuition. In that deep force, the last fact behind which analysis cannot go, all things find their common origin. For, the sense of being which in calm hours  
15 rises, we know not how, in the soul, is not diverse from things, from space, from light, from time, from man, but one with them, and proceeds obviously from the same source whence their life and being also proceed. We first share the life by which things exist, and afterwards see them as appearances in nature, and forget that we have shared their cause. Here is the fountain of action  
20 and of thought. Here are the lungs of that inspiration which giveth man wisdom, and which cannot be denied without impiety and atheism. We lie in the lap of immense intelligence, which makes us receivers of its truth and organs of its activity. When we discern justice, when we discern truth, we do nothing of ourselves, but allow a passage to its beams. If we ask whence this comes,  
25 if we seek to pry into the soul that causes, all philosophy is at fault. Its presence or its absence is all we can affirm. Every man discriminates between the voluntary acts of his mind, and his involuntary perceptions, and knows that to his involuntary perceptions a perfect faith is due. He may err in the expression of them, but he knows that these things are so, like day and night, not to be disputed. My wilful actions and acquisitions are but roving;—the idlest reverie,  
30 the faintest native emotion, command my curiosity and respect. Thoughtless people contradict as readily the statement of perceptions as of opinions, or rather much more readily; for, they do not distinguish between perception and notion. They fancy that I choose to see this or that thing. But perception is not whimsical, but fatal. If I see a trait, my children will see it after me, and in course  
35 of time, all mankind,—although it may chance that no one has seen it before me. For my perception of it is as much a fact as the sun.

- The relations of the soul to the divine spirit are so pure, that it is profane to seek to interpose helps. It must be that when God speaketh he should communicate, not one thing, but all things; should fill the world with his voice;  
40 should scatter forth light, nature, time, souls, from the centre of the present thought; and new date and new create the whole. Whenever a mind is simple, and receives a divine wisdom, old things pass away,—means, teachers, texts,

8. *parallax*—the difference in the direction of a star as seen from some point on the earth's surface, and as seen from some other assumed point, as the center of the sun. 12. *Intuition*—The student should compare this definition of intuition with Emerson's use of the word "Reason" in *Nature*.

temples fall; it lives now, and absorbs past and future into the present hour. All things are made sacred by relation to it,—one as much as another. All things are dissolved to their centre by their cause, and, in the universal miracle, petty and particular miracles disappear. If, therefore, a man claims to know and speak of God, and carries you backward to the phraseology of some old mouldered nation in another country, in another world, believe him not. Is the acorn better than the oak which is its fulness and completion? Is the parent better than the child into whom he has cast his ripened being? Whence, then, this worship of the past? The centuries are conspirators against the sanity and authority of the soul. Time and space are but physiological colors which the eye makes, but the soul is light; where it is, is day; where it was, is night; and history is an impertinence and an injury, if it be anything more than a cheerful *moral fable* or parable of my being and becoming.

Man is timid and apologetic; he is no longer upright; he dares not say 'I think,' 'I am,' but quotes some saint or sage. He is ashamed before the blade of grass or the blowing rose. These roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones; they are for what they are; they exist with God to-day. There is no time to them. There is simply the rose; it is perfect in every moment of its existence. Before a leaf-bud has burst, its whole life acts; in the full-blown flower there is no more; in the leafless root there is no less. Its nature is satisfied, and it satisfies nature, in all moments alike. But man postpones or remembers; he does not live in the present, but with reverted eye laments the past, or, heedless of the riches that surround him, stands on tiptoe to foresee the future. He cannot be happy and strong until he too lives with nature in the present, above time.

This should be plain enough. Yet see what strong intellects dare not yet hear God himself, unless he speaks the phraseology of I know not what David, or Jeremiah, or Paul. We shall not always set so great a price on a few texts, on a few lives. We are like children who repeat by rote the sentences of grandames and tutors, and, as they grow older, of the men of talents and character they chance to see,—painfully recollecting the exact words they spoke; afterwards, when they come into the point of view which those had who uttered these sayings, they understand them, and are willing to let the words go; for, at any time, they can use words as good when occasion comes. If we live truly, we shall see truly. It is as easy for the strong man to be strong, as it is for the weak to be weak. When we have new perception, we shall gladly disburden the memory of its hoarded treasures as old rubbish. When a man lives with God, his voice shall be as sweet as the murmur of the brook and the rustle of the corn.

And now at last the highest truth on this subject remains unsaid; probably cannot be said; for all that we say is the far-off remembering of the intuition. That thought, by what I can now nearest approach to say it, is this. When good is near you, when you have life in yourself, it is not by any known or accustomed way; you shall not discern the foot-prints of any other; you shall not see the face of man; you shall not hear any name;—the way, the thought, the good, shall be wholly strange and new. It shall exclude example and experience. You take the way from man, not to man. All persons that ever existed

are its forgotten ministers. Fear and hope are alike beneath it. There is somewhat low even in hope. In the hour of vision, there is nothing that can be called gratitude, nor properly joy. The soul raised over passion beholds identity and eternal causation, perceives the self-existence of Truth and Right, and calms  
 5 itself with knowing that all things go well. Vast spaces of nature, the Atlantic Ocean, the South Sea,—long intervals of time, years, centuries,—are of no account. This which I think and feel underlay every former state of life and circumstances, as it does underlie my present, and what is called life, and what is called death.

- 10 Life only avails, not the having lived. Power ceases in the instant of repose; it resides in the moment of transition from a past to a new state, in the shooting of the gulf, in the darting to an aim. This one fact the world hates, that the soul *becomes*; for that for ever degrades the past, turns all riches to poverty, all reputation to a shame, confounds the saint with the rogue, shoves Jesus and  
 15 Judas equally aside. Why, then, do we prate of self-reliance? Inasmuch as the soul is present, there will be power not confident but agent. To talk of reliance is a poor external way of speaking. Speak rather of that which relies, because it works and is. Who has more obedience than I masters me, though he should not raise his finger. Round him I must revolve by the gravitation of spirits.  
 20 We fancy it rhetoric, when we speak of eminent virtue. We do not yet see that virtue is Height, and that a man or a company of men, plastic and permeable to principles, by the law of nature must overpower and ride all cities, nations, kings, rich men, poets, who are not.

- This is the ultimate fact which we so quickly reach on this, as on every topic,  
 25 the resolution of all into the ever-blessed ONE. Self-existence is the attribute of the Supreme Cause, and it constitutes the measure of good by the degree in which it enters into all lower forms. All things real are so by so much virtue as they contain. Commerce, husbandry, hunting, whaling, war, eloquence, personal weight, are somewhat, and engage my respect as examples of its presence  
 30 and impure action. I see the same law working in nature for conservation and growth. Power is in nature the essential measure of right. Nature suffers nothing to remain in her kingdoms which cannot help itself. The genesis and maturation of a planet, its poise and orbit, the bended tree recovering itself from the strong wind, the vital resources of every animal and vegetable, are demon-  
 35 strations of the self-sufficing, and therefore self-relying soul.

- Thus all concentrates: let us not rove; let us sit at home with the cause. Let us stun and astonish the intruding rabble of men and books and institutions, by a simple declaration of the divine fact. Bid the invaders take the shoes from off their feet, for God is here within. Let our simplicity judge them, and our  
 40 docility to our own law demonstrate the poverty of nature and fortune beside our native riches.

- But now we are a mob. Man does not stand in awe of man, nor is his genius admonished to stay at home, to put itself in communication with the internal ocean, but it goes abroad to beg a cup of water of the urns of other men. We  
 45 must go alone. I like the silent church before the service begins, better than any

preaching. How far off, how cool, how chaste the persons look, begirt each one with a precinct or sanctuary! So let us always sit. Why should we assume the faults of our friend, or wife, or father, or child, because they sit around our hearth, or are said to have the same blood? All men have my blood, and I all men's. Not for that will I adopt their petulance or folly, even to the extent of being ashamed of it. But your isolation must not be mechanical, but spiritual, that is, must be elevation. At times the whole world seems to be in conspiracy to importune you with emphatic trifles. Friend, client, child, sickness, fear, want, charity, all knock at once at thy closet door, and say,—'Come out unto us.' But keep thy state; come not into their confusion. The power men possess to annoy me, I give them by a weak curiosity. No man can come near me but through my act. "What we love that we have, but by desire we bereave ourselves of the love."

If we cannot at once rise to the sanctities of obedience and faith, let us at least resist our temptations; let us enter into the state of war, and wake Thor and Woden, courage and constancy, in our Saxon breasts. This is to be done in our smooth times by speaking the truth. Check this lying hospitality and lying affection. Live no longer to the expectation of these deceived and deceiving people with whom we converse. Say to them, O father, O mother, O wife, O brother, O friend, I have lived with you after appearances hitherto. Henceforward I am the truth's. Be it known unto you that henceforward I obey no law less than the eternal law. I will have no covenants but proximities. I shall endeavor to nourish my parents, to support my family, to be the chaste husband of one wife,—but these relations I must fill after a new and unprecedented way. I appeal from your customs. I must be myself. I cannot break myself any longer for you, or you. If you can love me for what I am, we shall be the happier. If you cannot, I will still seek to deserve that you should. I will not hide my tastes or aversions. I will so trust that what is deep is holy, that I will do strongly before the sun and moon whatever inly rejoices me, and the heart appoints. If you are noble, I will love you; if you are not, I will not hurt you and myself by hypocritical attentions. If you are true, but not in the same truth with me, cleave to your companions; I will seek my own. I do this not selfishly but humbly and truly. It is alike your interest, and mine, and all men's, however long we have dwelt in lies, to live in truth. Does this sound harsh to-day? You will soon love what is dictated by your nature as well as mine, and if we follow the truth, it will bring us out safe at last.—But so you may give these friends pain. Yes, but I cannot sell my liberty and my power, to save their sensibility. Besides, all persons have their moments of reason, when they look out into the region of absolute truth; then will they justify me, and do the same thing.

The populace think that your rejection of popular standards is a rejection of all standard, and mere antinomianism; and the bold sensualist will use the name of philosophy to gild his crimes. But the law of consciousness abides. There are two confessionals, in one or the other of which we must be shriven. You may fulfil your round of duties by clearing yourself in the *direct*, or in the *reflex* way. Consider whether you have satisfied your relations to father, mother,

15-16. Thor and Woden—the Scandinavian god of war and the Scandinavian Odin. 41. antinomianism—the doctrine that faith alone is necessary to salvation, and not the moral law.

cousin, neighbour, town, cat and dog; whether any of these can upbraid you. But I may also neglect this reflex standard, and absolve me to myself. I have my own stern claims and perfect circle. It denies the name of duty to many offices that are called duties. But if I can discharge its debts, it enables me to  
 5 dispense with the popular code. If any one imagines that this law is lax, let him keep its commandment one day.

And truly it demands something godlike in him who has cast off the common motives of humanity, and has ventured to trust himself for a taskmaster. High be his heart, faithful his will, clear his sight, that he may in good earnest  
 10 be doctrine, society, law, to himself, that a simple purpose may be to him as strong as iron necessity is to others!

If any man consider the present aspects of what is called by distinction *society*, he will see the need of these ethics. The sinew and heart of man seem to be drawn out, and we are become timorous, desponding whimperers. We are  
 15 afraid of truth, afraid of fortune, afraid of death, and afraid of each other. Our age yields no great and perfect persons. We want men and women who shall renovate life and our social state, but we see that most natures are insolvent, cannot satisfy their own wants, have an ambition out of all proportion to their practical force and do lean and beg day and night continually. Our  
 20 housekeeping is mendicant, our arts, our occupations, our marriages, our religion, we have not chosen, but society has chosen for us. We are parlour soldiers. We shun the rugged battle of fate, where strength is born.

If our young men miscarry in their first enterprises, they lose all heart. If the young merchant fails, men say he is *ruined*. If the finest genius studies at  
 25 one of our colleges, and is not installed in an office within one year afterwards in the cities or suburbs of Boston or New York, it seems to his friends and to himself that he is right in being disheartened, and in complaining the rest of his life. A sturdy lad from New Hampshire or Vermont, who in turn tries all the professions, who *teams it, farms it, peddles*, keeps a school, preaches, edits a  
 30 newspaper, goes to Congress, buys a township, and so forth, in successive years, and always, like a cat, falls on his feet, is worth a hundred of these city dolls. He walks abreast with his days, and feels no shame in not 'studying a profession,' for he does not postpone his life, but lives already. He has not one chance, but a hundred chances. Let a Stoic open the resources of man, and tell men  
 35 they are not leaning willows, but can and must detach themselves; that with the exercise of self-trust, new powers shall appear; that a man is the word made flesh, born to shed healing to the nations, that he should be ashamed of our compassion, and that the moment he acts from himself, tossing the laws, the books, idolatries, and customs out of the window, we pity him no more, but  
 40 thank and revere him,—and that teacher shall restore the life of man to splendor, and make his name dear to all history.

It is easy to see that a greater self-reliance must work a revolution in all the offices and relations of men; in their religion; in their education; in their pur suits; their modes of living; their association; in their property; in their spec  
 45 ulative views.

34. Stoic—that is, a Stoic philosopher. Stoicism taught complete self-reliance. 36-37. word made flesh—Cf. John 1: 14.

1. In what prayers do men allow themselves! That which they call a holy office is not so much as brave and manly. Prayer looks abroad and asks for some foreign addition to come through some foreign virtue, and loses itself in endless mazes of natural and supernatural, and mediatorial and miraculous. Prayer that craves a particular commodity,—anything less than all good,—is vicious. Prayer is the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view. It is the soliloquy of a beholding and jubilant soul. It is the spirit of God pronouncing his works good. But prayer as a means to effect a private end is meanness and theft. It supposes dualism and not unity in nature and consciousness. As soon as the man is at one with God, he will not beg. He will then see prayer in all action. The prayer of the farmer kneeling in his field to weed it, the prayer of the rower kneeling with the stroke of his oar, are true prayers heard throughout nature, though for cheap ends. Caratach, in Fletcher's *Bonduca*, when admonished to inquire the mind of the god Audate, replies,—

"His hidden meaning lies in our endeavours;  
Our valors are our best gods."

Another sort of false prayers are our regrets. Discontent is the want of self-reliance: it is infirmity of will. Regret calamities, if you can thereby help the sufferer; if not, attend your own work, and already the evil begins to be repaired. Our sympathy is just as base. We come to them who weep foolishly, and sit down and cry for company, instead of imparting to them truth and health in rough electric shocks, putting them once more in communication with their own reason. The secret of fortune is joy in our hands. Welcome evermore to gods and men is the self-helping man. For him all doors are flung wide: him all tongues greet, all honors crown, all eyes follow with desire. Our love goes out to him and embraces him, because he did not need it. We solicitously and apologetically caress and celebrate him, because he held on his way and scorned our disapprobation. The gods love him because men hated him. "To the persevering mortal," said Zoroaster, "the blessed Immortals are swift."

As men's prayers are a disease of the will, so are their creeds a disease of the intellect. They say with those foolish Israelites, "Let not God speak to us, lest we die. Speak thou, speak any man with us, and we will obey." Everywhere I am hindered of meeting God in my brother, because he has shut his own temple doors, and recites fables merely of his brother's, or his brother's brother's God. Every new mind is a new classification. If it prove a mind of uncommon activity and power, a Locke, a Lavoisier, a Hutton, a Bentham, a Fourier, it imposes its classification on other men, and lo! a new system. In proportion to the depth of the thought, and so to the number of the objects it touches and brings within reach of the pupil, is his complacency. But chiefly

8. **pronouncing**—*Cf.* Genesis 1: 25. 14. **Bonduca**—supposed to be by Beaumont and Fletcher. The quotation (which Emerson has slightly altered) is from Act III, scene 1. The deity in question is Andate or Andraste. 29. **Zoroaster**—the legendary founder of ancient Persian religion. 31. "Let not"—*Cf.* Ex. 20: 19. 36-37. **Locke** . . . **Fourier**—Locke is here considered as the founder of systematic views in political science, philosophy, et cetera; Antoine Laurent **Lavoisier** (1743-1794), the founder of modern chemistry; James **Hutton** (1726-1797), the first "modern" British geologist; Jeremy **Bentham** (1748-1832) "systematized" law and government; François Marie Charles **Fourier** (1772-1837) sought to establish a systematic form of society.

is this apparent in creeds and churches, which are also classifications of some powerful mind acting on the elemental thought of duty, and man's relation to the Highest. Such is Calvinism, Quakerism, Swedenborgism. The pupil takes the same delight in subordinating every thing to the new terminology, as a

- 5 girl who has just learned botany in seeing a new earth and new seasons thereby. It will happen for a time, that the pupil will find his intellectual power has grown by the study of his master's mind. But in all unbalanced minds, the classification is idolized, passes for the end, and not for a speedily exhaustible means, so that the walls of the system blend to their eye in the remote horizon
- 10 with the walls of the universe; the luminaries of heaven seem to them hung on the arch their master built. They cannot imagine how you aliens have any right to see,—how you can see; "It must be somehow that you stole the light from us." They do not yet perceive that light, unsystematic, indomitable, will break into any cabin, even into theirs. Let them chirp awhile and call it their
- 15 own. If they are honest and do well, presently their neat new pinfold will be too strait and low, will crack, will lean, will rot and vanish, and the immortal light, all young, and joyful, million-orbed, million-colored, will beam over the universe as on the first morning.

2. It is for want of self-culture that the superstition of Travelling, whose
- 20 idols are Italy, England, Egypt, retains its fascination for all educated Americans. They who made England, Italy, or Greece venerable in the imagination did so by sticking fast where they were, like an axis of the earth. In manly hours, we feel that duty is our place. The soul is no traveller; the wise man stays at home, and when his necessities, his duties, on any occasion call him
- 25 from his house, or into foreign lands, he is at home still, and shall make men sensible by the expression of his countenance, that he goes the missionary of wisdom and virtue, and visits cities and men like a sovereign, and not like an interloper or a valet.

- I have no Churlish objection to the circumnavigation of the globe, for the
- 30 purposes of art, of study, and benevolence, so that the man is first domesticated, or does not go abroad with the hope of finding somewhat greater than he knows. He who travels to be amused, or to get somewhat which he does not carry, travels away from himself, and grows old even in youth among old things. In Thebes, in Palmyra, his will and mind have become old and dilapi-
- 35 dated as they. He carries ruins to ruins.

- Travelling is a fool's paradise. Our first journeys discover to us the indifference of places. At home I dream that at Naples, at Rome, I can be intoxicated with beauty, and lose my sadness. I pack my trunk, embrace my friends, embark on the sea and at last wake up at Naples, and there beside me is the stern
- 40 fact, the sad self, unrelenting, identical, that I fled from. I seek the Vatican, and the palaces. I affect to be intoxicated with sights and suggestions, but I am not intoxicated. My giant goes with me wherever I go.

3. But the rage of travelling is a symptom of a deeper unsoundness affecting

34. **Thebes . . . Palmyra**—The ruins of the ancient city of Thebes near Karnak and Luxor are among the most impressive monuments of ancient Egypt. The ruins at Palmyra, in Syria, are supposed to mark the reign of Zenobia, "Queen of the East." 37. **Naples . . . Rome**—cities visited by Emerson during his first trip abroad.

the whole intellectual action. The intellect is vagabond, and our system of education fosters restlessness. Our minds travel when our bodies are forced to stay at home. We imitate; and what is imitation but the travelling of the mind? Our houses are built with foreign taste; our shelves are garnished with foreign ornaments; our opinions, our tastes, our faculties, lean, and follow the Past and the Distant. The soul created the arts wherever they have flourished. It was in his own mind that the artist sought his model. It was an application of his own thought to the thing to be done and the conditions to be observed. And why need we copy the Doric or the Gothic model? Beauty, convenience, grandeur of thought, and quaint expression are as near to us as to any, and if the American artist will study with hope and love the precise thing to be done by him, considering the climate, the soil, the length of the day, the wants of the people, the habit and form of the government, he will create a house in which all these will find themselves fitted, and taste and sentiment will be satisfied also.

Insist on yourself; never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another, you have only an extemporaneous, half possession. That which each can do best, none but his Maker can teach him. No man yet knows what it is, nor can, till that person has exhibited it. Where is the master who could have taught Shakspeare? Where is the master who could have instructed Franklin, or Washington, or Bacon, or Newton? Every great man is a unique. The Scipionism of Scipio is precisely that part he could not borrow. Shakspeare will never be made by the study of Shakspeare. Do that which is assigned you, and you cannot hope too much or dare too much. There is at this moment for you an utterance brave and grand as that of the colossal chisel of Phidias, or trowel of the Egyptians, or the pen of Moses, or Dante, but different from all these. Not possibly will the soul, all rich, all eloquent, with thousand-cloven tongue, deign to repeat itself; but if you can hear what these patriarchs say, surely you can reply to them in the same pitch of voice; for the ear and the tongue are two organs of one nature. Abide in the simple and noble regions of thy life, obey thy heart, and thou shall reproduce the Foreworld again.

4. As our Religion, our Education, our Art look abroad, so does our spirit of society. All men plume themselves on the improvement of society, and no man improves.

Society never advances. It recedes as fast on one side as it gains on the other. It undergoes continual changes; it is barbarous, it is civilized, it is christianized, it is rich, it is scientific; but this change is not amelioration. For every thing that is given, something is taken. Society acquires new arts, and loses old instincts. What a contrast between the well-clad, reading, writing, thinking American, with a watch, a pencil, and a bill of exchange in his pocket, and the naked New Zealander, whose property is a club, a spear, a mat, and an undivided twentieth of a shed to sleep under! But compare the health of the two men, and you shall see that the white man has lost his aboriginal strength. If

9. **Doric . . . Gothic**—that is, why copy classic or medieval architecture? 22. **Scipio**—Scipio Africanus Major (237?-183 B.C.), the conqueror of Hannibal, a type of Roman will power. 25. **Phidias**—(498-432 B.C.) the Athenian sculptor renowned for colossal statues of Athene and of Zeus. 26. **trowel**—that is, of a stonemason.



the traveller tell us truly, strike the savage with a broad-axe and in a day or two the flesh shall unite and heal as if you struck the blow into soft pitch, and the same blow shall send the white to his grave.

- The civilized man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet. He is supported on crutches, but lacks so much support of muscle. He has a fine Geneva watch, but he fails of the skill to tell the hour by the sun. A Greenwich nautical almanac he has, and so being sure of the information when he wants it, the man in the street does not know a star in the sky. The solstice he does not observe; the equinox he knows as little; and the whole bright calendar of the year is without a dial in his mind. His note-books impair his memory; his libraries overload his wit; the insurance-office increases the number of accidents; and it may be a question whether machinery does not encumber; whether we have not lost by refinement some energy, by a Christianity, entrenched in establishments and forms, some vigor of wild virtue. For every Stoic was a Stoic; but in Christendom where is the Christian?

- There is no more deviation in the moral standard than in the standard of height or bulk. No greater men are now than ever were. A singular equality may be observed between the great men of the first and of the last ages; nor can all the science, art, religion, and philosophy of the nineteenth century avail to educate greater men than Plutarch's heroes, three or four and twenty centuries ago. Not in time is the race progressive. Phocion, Socrates, Anaxagoras, Diogenes, are great men, but they leave no class. He who is really of their class will not be called by their name, but will be his own man, and in his turn the founder of a sect. The arts and inventions of each period are only its costume, and do not invigorate men. The harm of the improved machinery may compensate its good. Hudson and Behring accomplished so much in their fishing-boats, as to astonish Parry and Franklin, whose equipment exhausted the resources of science and art. Galileo, with an opera-glass, discovered a more splendid series of celestial phenomena than any one since. Columbus found the New World in an undecked boat. It is curious to see the periodical disuse and perishing of means and machinery, which were introduced with loud laudation a few years or centuries before. The great genius returns to essential man. We reckoned the improvements of the art of war among the triumphs of science, and yet Napoleon conquered Europe by the bivouac, which consisted of falling back on naked valor, and disencumbering it of all aids. The Emperor held it impossible to make a perfect army, says Las Casas, "without abolishing our arms,

6. **Geneva**—Switzerland was formerly the headquarters of fine watchmaking. 6. **Greenwich**—the seat of the Greenwich Royal Observatory. The "Greenwich meridian" is the prime meridian in astronomical calculation. 21-22. **Phocion** . . . **Diogenes**—These names have been explained except for that of Anaxagoras (about 500-428 B.C.), who foreshadowed Plato and Aristotle. **Diogenes** (about 412-323 B.C.) is well known. 26-27. **Hudson** . . . **Franklin**—Henry Hudson (died 1611) explored Hudson Bay, 1610-11; Vitus Behring or Bering (1680-1741) explored the area around Bering Sea in 1740-41. Sir William Edward Parry (1790-1855) commenced his career as a polar explorer in 1811, and sought the Northwest Passage from 1819 to 1827-28. Sir John Franklin (1786-1847) disappeared in the Arctic in 1845. Parry and Franklin were associated in an expedition which started in 1820. 28. **Galileo**—Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) in 1609 completed the first telescope. 35. **Emperor**—Napoleon I. 36. **Las Casas**—Emmanuel Augustin Dieudonné, Marquis de Las Cases (1766-1842), who accompanied Napoleon to St. Helena as his secretary, taking notes of Napoleon's conversations, which he incorporated in *Mémoires de Ste Hélène*, 1818, and again in 1823. Emerson read the book in 1838-39.

magazines, commissaries, and carriages, until, in imitation of the Roman custom, the soldier should receive his supply of corn, grind it in his hand-mill, and bake his bread himself."

Society is a wave. The wave moves onward, but the water of which it is composed does not. The same particle does not rise from the valley to the ridge. 5 Its unity is only phenomenal. The persons who make up a nation to-day, next year die, and their experience dies with them.

And so the reliance on Property, including the reliance on governments which protect it, is the want of self-reliance. Men have looked away from themselves and at things so long, that they have come to esteem the religious, learned, and 10 civil institutions as guards of property, and they deprecate assaults on these, because they feel them to be assaults on property. They measure their esteem of each other by what each has, and not by what each is. But a cultivated man becomes ashamed of his property, out of new respect for his nature. Especially 15 he hates what he has, if he see that it is accidental,—came to him by inheritance, or gift, or crime; then he feels that it is not having; it does not belong to him, has no root in him, and merely lies there, because no revolution or no robber takes it away. But that which a man is does always by necessity acquire, and what the man acquires is living property, which does not wait the beck 20 of rulers, or mobs, or revolutions, or fire, or storm, or bankruptcies, but perpetually renews itself wherever the man breathes. "Thy lot or portion of life," said the Caliph Ali, "is seeking after thee; therefore be at rest from seeking after it." Our dependence on these foreign goods leads us to our slavish respect for numbers. The political parties meet in numerous conventions; the greater 25 the concourse, and with each new uproar of announcement, The delegation from Essex! The Democrats from New Hampshire! The Whigs of Maine! the young patriot feels himself stronger than before by a new thousand of eyes and arms. In like manner the reformers summon conventions, and vote and resolve in multitude. Not so, O friends! will the God deign to enter and inhabit you, but by a method precisely the reverse. It is only as a man puts off all foreign 30 support, and stands alone, that I see him to be strong and to prevail. He is weaker by every recruit to his banner. Is not a man better than a town? Ask nothing of men, and, in the endless mutation, thou only firm column must presently appear the upholder of all that surrounds thee. He who knows that power is inborn, that he is weak because he has looked for good out of him 35 and elsewhere, and so perceiving, throws himself unhesitatingly on his thought, instantly rights himself, stands in the erect position, commands his limbs, works miracles; just as a man who stands on his feet is stronger than a man who stands on his head.

So use all that is called Fortune. Most men gamble with her, and gain all, 40 and lose all, as her wheel rolls. But do thou leave as unlawful these winnings, and deal with Cause and Effect, the chancellors of God. In the Will work and

22. **Caliph Ali**—Ali ben Abu Talib (about 600-661), the fourth caliph, to whom much wisdom was attributed. A collection of his supposed sayings, translated by W. Yule, was published in Edinburgh in 1832. 26. **Democrats . . . Whigs**—The references are to political controversies in the thirties, the Whig Party being revived in 1834 to oppose Jackson and the Democrats. 33. **thou**—The syntax would be clearer if the text read: "thou, the only firm column, must," et cetera. 40. **Fortune**—The figure is of the goddess Fortune and her wheel.

- acquire, and thou hast chained the wheel of Chance, and shalt sit hereafter out of fear from her rotations. A political victory, a rise of rents, the recovery of your sick, or the return of your absent friend, or some other favorable event, raises your spirits, and you think good days are preparing for you. Do not believe it. Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles.

## THE OVER-SOUL

This essay was compounded from many simples, as the suggestive list of sources in the Concord edition, Vol. II, pp. 426-28, indicates. It appeared in the first series of *Essays*. The present text, like that of the preceding essay, is from the revised edition of 1847. It is preceded by the following verse mottoes:

"But souls that of his own good life partake,  
He loves as his own self; dear as his eye  
They are to Him: He'll never them forsake:  
When they shall die, then God himself shall die:  
They live, they live in blest eternity."

Henry More.

Space is ample, east and west,  
But two cannot go abreast,  
Cannot travel in it two:  
Yonder masterful cuckoo  
Crowds every egg out of the nest,  
Quick or dead, except its own;  
A spell is laid on sod and stone,  
Night and Day've been tampered with,  
Every quality and pith  
Surcharged and sultry with a power  
That works its will on age and hour.

- THERE is a difference between one and another hour of life, in their authority and subsequent effect. Our faith comes in moments; our vice is habitual. Yet there is a depth in those brief moments which con-  
10 strains us to ascribe more reality to them than to all other experiences. For this reason, the argument which is always forthcoming to silence those who conceive extraordinary hopes of man, namely, the appeal to experience, is forever invalid and vain. We give up the past to the objector, and yet we hope. He must explain this hope. We grant that human life is mean; but how did we  
15 find out that it was mean? What is the ground of this uneasiness of ours; of this old discontent? What is the universal sense of want and ignorance, but the fine innuendo by which the soul makes its enormous claim? Why do men feel that the natural history of man has never been written, but he is always leaving behind what you have said of him, and it becomes old, and books of  
20 metaphysics worthless? The philosophy of six thousand years has not searched the chambers and magazines of the soul. In its experiments there has always

remained, in the last analysis, a residuum it could not resolve. Man is a stream whose source is hidden. Our being is descending into us from we know not whence. The most exact calculator has no prescience that somewhat incalculable may not balk the very next moment. I am constrained every moment to acknowledge a higher origin for events than the will I call mine.

As with events, so is it with thoughts. When I watch that flowing river, which, out of regions I see not, pours for a season its streams into me, I see that I am a pensioner; not a cause but a surprised spectator of this ethereal water; that I desire and look up and put myself in the attitude of reception, but from some alien energy the visions come.

The Supreme Critic on the errors of the past and the present, and the only prophet of that which must be, is that great nature in which we rest, as the earth lies in the soft arms of the atmosphere; that Unity, that Over-Soul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other; that common heart, of which all sincere conversation is the worship, to which all right action is submission; that overpowering reality which confutes our tricks and talents, and constrains every one to pass for what he is, and to speak from his character, and not from his tongue, and which evermore tends to pass into our thought and hand, and become wisdom, and virtue, and power, and beauty. We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal ONE. And this deep power in which we exist, and whose beatitude is all accessible to us, is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour, but the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object, are one. We see the world piece by piece, as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree; but the whole, of which these are the shining parts, is the soul. Only by the vision of that Wisdom can the horoscope of the ages be read, and by falling back on our better thoughts, by yielding to the spirit of prophecy which is innate in every man, we can know what it saith. Every man's words, who speaks from that life, must sound vain to those who do not dwell in the same thought on their own part. I dare not speak for it. My words do not carry its august sense; they fall short and cold. Only itself can inspire whom it will, and behold! their speech shall be lyrical, and sweet, and universal as the rising of the wind. Yet I desire, even by profane words, if I may not use sacred, to indicate the heaven of this deity, and to report what hints I have collected of the transcendent simplicity and energy of the Highest Law.

If we consider what happens in conversation, in reveries, in remorse, in times of passion, in surprises, in the instructions of dreams, wherein often we see ourselves in masquerade,—the droll disguises only magnifying and enhancing a real element, and forcing it on our distant notice,—we shall catch many hints that will broaden and lighten into knowledge of the secret of nature. All goes to show that the soul in man is not an organ, but animates and exercises all the organs; is not a function, like the power of memory, of calculation, of comparison, but uses these as hands and feet; is not a faculty, but a light; is not the intellect or the will, but the master of the intellect and the will; is the background of our being, in which they lie,—an immensity not possessed and that

cannot be possessed. From within or from behind, a light shines through us upon things, and makes us aware that we are nothing, but the light is all. A man is the façade of a temple wherein all wisdom and all good abide. What we commonly call man, the eating, drinking, planting, counting man, does not, as we know him, represent himself, but misrepresents himself. Him we do not respect, but the soul, whose organ he is, would he let it appear through his action, would make our knees bend. When it breathes through his intellect, it is genius; when it breathes through his will, it is virtue; when it flows through his affection, it is love. And the blindness of the intellect begins, when it would be something of itself. The weakness of the will begins when the individual would be something of himself. All reform aims, in some one particular, to let the soul have its way through us; in other words, to engage us to obey.

Of this pure nature every man is at some time sensible. Language cannot paint it with his colors. It is too subtle. It is undefinable, unmeasurable, but we know that it pervades and contains us. We know that all spiritual being is in man. A wise old proverb says, "God comes to see us without bell"; that is, as there is no screen or ceiling between our heads and the infinite heavens, so is there no bar or wall in the soul where man, the effect, ceases, and God, the cause, begins. The walls are taken away. We lie open on one side to the deeps of spiritual nature, to the attributes of God. Justice we see and know, Love, Freedom, Power. These natures no man ever got above, but they tower over us, and most in the moment when our interests tempt us to wound them.

The sovereignty of this nature whereof we speak is made known by its independency of those limitations which circumscribe us on every hand. The soul circumscribes all things. As I have said, it contradicts all experience. In like manner it abolishes time and space. The influence of the senses has, in most men, overpowered the mind to that degree, that the walls of time and space have come to look real and insurmountable; and to speak with levity of these limits is, in the world, the sign of insanity. Yet time and space are but inverse measures of the force of the soul. The spirit sports with time,—

"Can crowd eternity into an hour,  
Or stretch an hour to eternity."

We are often made to feel that there is another youth and age than that which is measured from the year of our natural birth. Some thoughts always find us young, and keep us so. Such a thought is the love of the universal and eternal beauty. Every man parts from that contemplation with the feeling that it rather belongs to ages than to mortal life. The least activity of the intellectual powers redeems us in a degree from the conditions of time. In sickness, in languor, give us a strain of poetry, or a profound sentence, and we are refreshed; or produce a volume of Plato, or Shakspeare, or remind us of their names, and instantly we come into a feeling of longevity. See how the deep divine thought reduces centuries, and millenniums, and makes itself present through all ages. Is the teaching of Christ less effective now than it was when first his mouth was opened? The emphasis of facts and persons in my thought has nothing to

16. "God comes . . ."—Emerson found this quotation in a list of Spanish proverbs. See *Journals*, Vol. II, p. 480. 31-32. "Can crowd . . ."—From William Blake's "Auguries of Innocence."

do with time. And so, always, the soul's scale is one; the scale of the senses and the understanding is another. Before the revelations of the soul, Time, Space, and Nature shrink away. In common speech, we refer all things to time, as we habitually refer the immensely sundered stars to one concave sphere. And so we say that the Judgment is distant or near, that the Millennium approaches, that a day of certain political, moral, social reforms is at hand, and the like, when we mean, that, in the nature of things, one of the facts we contemplate is external and fugitive, and the other is permanent and connate with the soul. The things we now esteem fixed shall, one by one, detach themselves, like ripe fruit, from our experience, and fall. The wind shall blow them none knows whither. The landscape, the figures, Boston, London, are facts as fugitive as any institution past, or any whiff of mist or smoke, and so is society, and so is the world. The soul looketh steadily forwards, creating a world before her, leaving worlds behind her. She has no dates, nor rites, nor persons, nor specialties, nor men. The soul knows only the soul; the web of events is the flowing robe in which she is clothed.

After its own law and not by arithmetic is the rate of its progress to be computed. The soul's advances are not made by gradation, such as can be represented by motion in a straight line; but rather by ascension of state, such as can be represented by metamorphosis,—from the egg to the worm, from the worm to the fly. The growths of genius are of a certain *total* character, that does not advance the elect individual first over John, then Adam, then Richard, and give to each the pain of discovered inferiority, but by every throes of growth the man expands there where he works, passing, at each pulsation, classes, populations, of men. With each divine impulse the mind rends the thin rinds of the visible and finite, and comes out into eternity, and inspires and expires its air. It converses with truths that have always been spoken in the world, and becomes conscious of a closer sympathy with Zeno and Arrian, than with persons in the house.

This is the law of moral and of mental gain. The simple rise as by specific levity, not into a particular virtue, but into the region of all the virtues. They are in the spirit which contains them all. The soul requires purity, but purity is not it; requires justice, but justice is not that; requires beneficence, but is somewhat better; so that there is a kind of descent and accommodation felt when we leave speaking of moral nature to urge a virtue which it enjoins. To the well-born child, all the virtues are natural, and not painfully acquired. Speak to his heart, and the man becomes suddenly virtuous.

Within the same sentiment is the germ of intellectual growth, which obeys the same law. Those who are capable of humility, of justice, of love, of aspiration, stand already on a platform that commands the sciences and arts, speech and poetry, action and grace. For whoso dwells in this moral beatitude already anticipates those special powers which men prize so highly. The lover has no

5. **Millennium**—William Miller (1782-1849) was arousing great excitement in America as Emerson wrote by prophesying that the world would come to an end in 1843. 8. **connate**—born with. 28. **Zeno**—the Greek philosopher, founder of the Stoic school, supposed to have lived in the late fourth and early third centuries B.C. 28. **Arrian**—(died 180 A.D.) a pupil of Epictetus, whose notes are the main source of modern knowledge of Epictetus. 30-31. **specific levity**—suggested by the phrase "specific gravity" in physics.

talent, no skill, which passes for quite nothing with his enamored maiden, however little she may possess of related faculty; and the heart which abandons itself to the Supreme Mind finds itself related to all its works, and will travel a royal road to particular knowledges and powers. In ascending to this primary  
 5 and aboriginal sentiment, we have come from our remote station on the circumference instantaneously to the centre of the world, where, as in the closet of God, we see causes, and anticipate the universe, which is but a slow effect.

One mode of the divine teaching is the incarnation of the spirit in a form,—in forms, like my own. I live in society; with persons who answer to thoughts  
 10 in my own mind, or express a certain obedience to the great instincts to which I live. I see its presence to them. I am certified of a common nature; and these other souls, these separated selves, draw me as nothing else can. They stir in me the new emotions we call passion; of love, hatred, fear, admiration, pity; thence come conversation, competition, persuasion, cities, and war. Persons are  
 15 supplementary to the primary teaching of the soul. In youth we are mad for persons. Childhood and youth see all the world in them. But the larger experience of man discovers the identical nature appearing through them all. Persons themselves acquaint us with the impersonal. In all conversation between two persons, tacit reference is made, as to a third party, to a common nature. That  
 20 third party or common nature is not social; it is impersonal; is God. And so in groups where debate is earnest, and especially on high questions, the company become aware that the thought rises to an equal level in all bosoms, that all have a spiritual property in what was said, as well as the sayer. They all become wiser than they were. It arches over them like a temple, this unity of  
 25 thought in which every heart beats with nobler sense of power and duty, and thinks and acts with unusual solemnity. All are conscious of attaining to a higher self-possession. It shines for all. There is a certain wisdom of humanity which is common to the greatest men with the lowest, and which our ordinary education often labors to silence and obstruct. The mind is one, and the best  
 30 minds, who love truth for its own sake, think much less of property in truth. They accept it thankfully everywhere, and do not label or stamp it with any man's name, for it is theirs long beforehand, and from eternity. The learned and the studious of thought have no monopoly of wisdom. Their violence of direction in some degree disqualifies them to think truly. We owe many valu-  
 35 able observations to people who are not very acute or profound, and who say the thing without effort, which we want and have long been hunting in vain. The action of the soul is oftener in that which is felt and left unsaid, than in that which is said in any conversation. It broods over every society, and they unconsciously seek for it in each other. We know better than we do. We do  
 40 not yet possess ourselves, and we know at the same time that we are much more. I feel the same truth how often in my trivial conversation with my neighbours, that somewhat higher in each of us overlooks this by-play, and Jove nods to Jove from behind each of us.

Men descend to meet. In their habitual and mean service to the world, for  
 45 which they forsake their native nobleness, they resemble those Arabian sheiks,

5. **aboriginal**—in the sense of “from the beginning.”

who dwell in mean houses, and affect an external poverty, to escape the rapacity of the Pacha, and reserve all their display of wealth for their interior and guarded retirements.

As it is present in all persons, so it is in every period of life. It is adult already in the infant man. In my dealing with my child, my Latin and Greek, my 5 accomplishments and my money stead me nothing; but as much soul as I have avails. If I am wilful, he sets his will against mine, one for one, and leaves me, if I please, the degradation of beating him by my superiority of strength. But if I renounce my will, and act for the soul, setting that up as umpire between us two, out of his young eyes looks the same soul; he reveres and loves 10 with me.

The soul is the perceiver and revealer of truth. We know truth when we see it, let skeptic and scoffer say what they choose. Foolish people ask you, when you have spoken what they do not wish to hear, 'How do you know it is truth, and not an error of your own?' We know truth when we see it, from opinion, 15 as we know when we are awake that we are awake. It was a grand sentence of Emanuel Swedenborg, which would alone indicate the greatness of that man's perception,—“It is no proof of a man's understanding to be able to affirm whatever he pleases; but to be able to discern that what is true is true, and that what is false is false, this is the mark and character of intelligence.” In the 20 book I read, the good thought returns to me, as every truth will, the image of the whole soul. To the bad thought which I find in it, the same soul becomes a discerning, separating sword, and lops it away. We are wiser than we know. If we will not interfere with our thought, but will act entirely, or see how the thing stands in God, we know the particular thing, and every thing, and every 25 man. For the Maker of all things and all persons stands behind us, and casts his dread omniscience through us over things.

But beyond this recognition of its own in particular passages of the individual's experience, it also reveals truth. And here we should seek to reinforce ourselves by its very presence, and to speak with a worthier, loftier strain of 30 that advent. For the soul's communication of truth is the highest event in nature, since it then does not give somewhat from itself, but it gives itself, or passes into and becomes that man whom it enlightens; or, in proportion to that truth he receives, it takes him to itself.

We distinguish the announcements of the soul, its manifestations of its own 35 nature, by the term *Revelation*. These are always attended by the emotion of the sublime. For this communication is an influx of the Divine mind into our mind. It is an ebb of the individual rivulet before the flowing surges of the sea of life. Every distinct apprehension of this central commandment agitates men with awe and delight. A thrill passes through all men at the reception of 40 new truth, or at the performance of a great action, which comes out of the heart of nature. In these communications, the power to see is not separated from the will to do, but the insight proceeds from obedience, and the obedience proceeds from a joyful perception. Every moment when the individual feels himself invaded by it is memorable. By the necessity of our constitution, a certain en- 45

2. **Pacha**—Turkish governor. When Emerson wrote, Arabia was part of the Turkish Empire.  
17. **Swedenborg**—See note 14-15, p. 407. 31. **advent**—coming; from ecclesiastical terminology.



thusiasm attends the individual's consciousness of that divine presence. The character and duration of this enthusiasm varies with the state of the individual, from an ecstasy and trance and prophetic inspiration,—which is its rarer appearance,—to the faintest glow of virtuous emotion, in which form it warms, 5 like our household fires, all the families and associations of men, and makes society possible. A certain tendency to insanity has always attended the opening of the religious sense in men, as if they had been “blasted with excess of light.” The trances of Socrates, the “union” of Plotinus, the vision of Porphyry, the conversion of Paul, the aurora of Behmen, the convulsions of George Fox and 10 his Quakers, the illumination of Swedenborg, are of this kind. What was in the case of these remarkable persons a ravishment, has, in innumerable instances in common life, been exhibited in less striking manner. Everywhere the history of religion betrays a tendency to enthusiasm. The rapture of the Moravian and Quietist; the opening of the eternal sense of the Word, in the 15 language of the New Jerusalem Church; the *revival* of the Calvinistic churches; the *experiences* of the Methodists, are varying forms of that shudder of awe and delight with which the individual soul always mingles with the universal soul.

The nature of these revelations is the same; they are perceptions of the absolute law. They are solutions of the soul's own questions. They do not answer 20 the questions which the understanding asks. The soul answers never by words, but by the thing itself that is inquired after.

Revelation is the disclosure of the soul. The popular notion of a revelation is, that it is a telling of fortunes. In past oracles of the soul, the understanding 25 seeks to find answers to sensual questions, and undertakes to tell from God how long men shall exist, what their hands shall do, and who shall be their company, adding names, and dates, and places. But we must pick no locks. We must check this low curiosity. An answer in words is delusive; it is really no answer to the questions you ask. Do not require a description of the coun- 30 tries towards which you sail. The description does not describe them to you, and to-morrow you arrive there, and know them by inhabiting them. Men ask concerning the immortality of the soul, the employments of heaven, the state of the sinner, and so forth. They even dream that Jesus has left replies to precisely these interrogatories. Never a moment did that sublime spirit speak in 35 their *patois*. To truth, justice, love, the attributes of the soul, the idea of im-

7. “blasted . . . light”—from “The Progress of Poetry” by Thomas Gray, line 101. 8. *trances of Socrates*—during which Socrates heard the divine voice speaking to him. 8. “*union*” of Plotinus—Plotinus (about 205-270), the most important of the Neo-Platonic philosophers, who taught that the union of the soul with God was through intellectual virtue and purity. 8. *vision of Porphyry*—Porphyry (233-about 304), a Greek philosopher and student of Plotinus. 9. *conversion of Paul*—Cf. Acts 9: 1-18; Gal. 1: 15-16. 9. *aurora of Behmen*—Jakob Boehme (1575-1624), German mystic; the reference is to his book *Aurora, oder die Morgenröte im Aufgang*, the mysticism of which was denounced as heretical. 9. *George Fox*—George Fox (1624-1691) founder of the English Quakers, whose mystic illumination was expressed in tremblings and shakings. 14. *Moravian*—a sect founded originally in Bohemia, whose tenets stressed the peace of the Christian soul. 14. *Quietist*—a seventeenth-century religious movement especially prominent in Latin Catholicism, whose theory was that the soul should passively await the mystic operation of revelation. 15. *New Jerusalem Church*—the church of the followers of Swedenborg. 16. *experiences*—The Methodists originally laid stress upon the “experience” of religious conversion, and the communication of that experience for the benefit of others. 35. *patois*—dialect.

mutableness is essentially associated. Jesus, living in these moral sentiments, heedless of sensual fortunes, heeding only the manifestations of these, never made the separation of the idea of duration from the essence of these attributes, nor uttered a syllable concerning the duration of the soul. It was left to his disciples to sever duration from the moral elements, and to teach the immortality of the soul as a doctrine, and maintain it by evidences. The moment the doctrine of the immortality is separately taught, man is already fallen. In the flowing of love, in the adoration of humility, there is no question of continuance. No inspired man ever asks this question, or condescends to these evidences. For the soul is true to itself, and the man in whom it is shed abroad cannot wander from the present, which is infinite, to a future which would be finite. 5 10

These questions which we lust to ask about the future are a confession of sin. God has no answer for them. No answer in words can reply to a question of things. It is not in an arbitrary "decree of God," but in the nature of man, that a veil shuts down on the facts of to-morrow; for the soul will not have us read any other cipher than that of cause and effect. By this veil, which curtains events, it instructs the children of men to live in to-day. The only mode of obtaining an answer to these questions of the senses is to forego all low curiosity, and, accepting the tide of being which floats us into the secret of nature, work and live, work and live, and all unawares the advancing soul has built and forged for itself a new condition, and the question and the answer are one. 15 20

By the same fire, vital, consecrating, celestial, which burns until it shall dissolve all things into the waves and surges of an ocean of light, we see and know each other, and what spirit each is of. Who can tell the grounds of his knowledge of the character of the several individuals in his circle of friends? No man. Yet their acts and words do not disappoint him. In that man, though he knew no ill of him, he put no trust. In that other, though they had seldom met, authentic signs had yet passed, to signify that he might be trusted as one who had an interest in his own character. We know each other very well,—which of us has been just to himself, and whether that which we teach or behold is only an aspiration, or is our honest effort also. 25 30

We are all discerners of spirits. That diagnosis lies aloft in our life or unconscious power. The intercourse of society,—its trade, its religion, its friendships, its quarrels,—is one wide, judicial investigation of character. In full court, or in small committee, or confronted face to face, accuser and accused, men offer themselves to be judged. Against their will they exhibit those decisive trifles by which character is read. But who judges? and what? Not our understanding. We do not read them by learning or craft. No; the wisdom of the wise man consists herein, that he does not judge them; he lets them judge themselves, and merely reads and records their own verdict. 35 40

By virtue of this inevitable nature, private will is overpowered, and, maugre our efforts or our imperfections, your genius will speak from you, and mine from me. That which we are, we shall teach, not voluntarily but involuntarily. Thoughts come into our minds by avenues which we never left open, and thoughts go out of our minds through avenues which we never voluntarily 45

opened. Character teaches over our head. The infallible index of true progress is found in the tone the man takes. Neither his age, nor his breeding, nor company, nor books, nor actions, nor talents, nor all together, can hinder him from being deferential to a higher spirit than his own. If he have not found his home  
 5 in God, his manners, his forms of speech, the turn of his sentences, the build, shall I say, of all his opinions will involuntarily confess it, let him brave it out how he will. If he have found his centre, the Deity will shine through him, through all the disguises of ignorance, of ungenial temperament, of unfavorable circumstance. The tone of seeking is one, and the tone of having is another.  
 10 other.

The great distinction between teachers sacred or literary,—between poets like Herbert, and poets like Pope,—between philosophers like Spinoza, Kant, and Coleridge, and philosophers like Locke, Paley, Mackintosh, and Stewart,—between men of the world who are reckoned accomplished talkers, and here and  
 15 there a fervent mystic, prophesying, half insane under the infinitude of his thought,—is that one class speak *from within*, or from experience, as parties and possessors of the fact; and the other class, *from without*, as spectators merely, or perhaps as acquainted with the fact on the evidence of third persons. It is of no use to preach to me from without. I can do that too easily  
 20 myself. Jesus speaks always from within, and in a degree that transcends all others. In that is the miracle. I believe beforehand that it ought so to be. All men stand continually in the expectation of the appearance of such a teacher. But if a man do not speak from within the veil, where the word is one with that it tells of, let him lowly confess it.

The same Omniscience flows into the intellect, and makes what we call  
 25 genius. Much of the wisdom of the world is not wisdom, and the most illuminated class of men are no doubt superior to literary fame, and are not writers. Among the multitude of scholars and authors, we feel no hallowing presence; we are sensible of a knack and skill rather than of inspiration; they have a  
 30 light, and know not whence it comes, and call it their own; their talent is some exaggerated faculty, some overgrown member, so that their strength is a disease. In these instances the intellectual gifts do not make the impression of virtue, but almost of vice; and we feel that a man's talents stand in the way of his advancement in truth. But genius is religious. It is a larger imbibing  
 35 of the common heart. It is not anomalous, but more like and not less like other men. There is, in all great poets, a wisdom of humanity which is superior to any talents they exercise. The author, the wit, the partisan, the fine gentleman, does not take place of the man. Humanity shines in Homer, in

12. **Herbert**—George Herbert (1593-1633), English writer of mystic religious verse. 12. **Pope**—Alexander Pope (1688-1744), here referred to because of the mundane tone of his verse satires. 12. **Spinoza**—Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), a Dutch Jew, one of the great philosophical leaders of pantheism, who taught that God is the substance of all things. 12. **Kant**—Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), founder of transcendental metaphysics. 13. **Coleridge**—Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), who, as a philosopher, tried to equate transcendental idealism and Christian theology. 13. **Locke**—See note 11, p. 428. 13. **Paley**—William Paley (1743-1805), English divine, whose *Natural Theology* sought to prove the existence of God from the evidences of design in the world. 13. **Mackintosh**—Sir James Mackintosh (1765-1832), Scotch philosopher, who taught a rationalistic metaphysics. 13. **Stewart**—Dugald Stewart (1753-1828), Scotch philosopher, and one of the "Common-Sense" school, who accepted the existence of both mind and matter as they are perceived in ordinary life.

Chaucer, in Spenser, in Shakspeare, in Milton. They are content with truth. They use the positive degree. They seem frigid and phlegmatic to those who have been spiced with the frantic passion and violent coloring of inferior, but popular writers. For they are poets by the free course which they allow to the informing soul, which through their eyes beholds again, and blesses the things which it hath made. The soul is superior to its knowledge; wiser than any of its works. The great poet makes us feel our own wealth, and then we think less of his compositions. His best communication to our mind is to teach us to despise all he has done. Shakspeare carries us to such a lofty strain of intelligent activity, as to suggest a wealth which beggars his own; and we then feel that the splendid works which he has created, and which in other hours we extol as a sort of self-existent poetry, take no stronger hold of real nature than the shadow of a passing traveller on the rock. The inspiration which uttered itself in Hamlet and Lear could utter things as good from day to day for ever. Why, then, should I make account of Hamlet and Lear, as if we had not the soul from which they fell as syllables from the tongue?

This energy does not descend into individual life on any other condition than entire possession. It comes to the lowly and simple; it comes to whomsoever will put off what is foreign and proud; it comes as insight; it comes as serenity and grandeur. When we see those whom it inhabits, we are apprised of new degrees of greatness. From that inspiration the man comes back with a changed tone. He does not talk with men with an eye to their opinion. He tries them. It requires of us to be plain and true. The vain traveller attempts to embellish his life by quoting my lord, and the prince, and the countess, who thus said or did to *him*. The ambitious vulgar show you their spoons, and brooches, and rings, and preserve their cards and compliments. The more cultivated, in their account of their own experience, cull out the pleasing, poetic circumstance,—the visit to Rome, the man of genius they saw, the brilliant friend they know; still further on, perhaps, the gorgeous landscape, the mountain lights, the mountain thoughts, they enjoyed yesterday,—and so seek to throw a romantic color over their life. But the soul that ascends to worship the great God is plain and true; has no rose-color, no fine friends, no chivalry, no adventures; does not want admiration; dwells in the hour that now is, in the earnest experience of the common day,—by reason of the present moment and the mere trifle having become porous to thought, and bibulous of the sea of light.

Converse with a mind that is grandly simple, and literature looks like word-catching. The simplest utterances are worthiest to be written, yet are they so cheap, and so things of course, that, in the infinite riches of the soul, it is like gathering a few pebbles off the ground, or bottling a little air in a phial, when the whole earth and the whole atmosphere are ours. Nothing can pass there, or make you one of the circle, but the casting aside your trappings, and dealing man to man in naked truth, plain confession, and omniscient affirmation.

Souls such as these treat you as gods would; walk as gods in the earth, accepting without any admiration your wit, your bounty, your virtue even,—say rather your act of duty, for your virtue they own as their proper blood, royal as themselves, and over-royal, and the father of the gods. But what

rebuke their plain fraternal bearing casts on the mutual flattery with which authors solace each other and wound themselves! These flatter not. I do not wonder that these men go to see Cromwell, and Christina, and Charles the Second, and James the First, and the Grand Turk. For they are, in their own  
 5 elevation, the fellows of kings, and must feel the servile tone of conversation in the world. They must always be a godsend to princes, for they confront them, a king to a king, without ducking or concession, and give a high nature the refreshment and satisfaction of resistance, of plain humanity, of even companionship, and of new ideas. They leave them wiser and superior men.  
 10 Souls like these make us feel that sincerity is more excellent than flattery. Deal so plainly with man and woman, as to constrain the utmost sincerity, and destroy all hope of trifling with you. It is the highest compliment you can pay. Their "highest praising," said Milton, "is not flattery, and their plainest advice is a kind of praising."  
 15 Ineffable is the union of man and God in every act of the soul. The simplest person, who in his integrity worships God, becomes God; yet for ever and ever the influx of this better and universal self is new and unsearchable. It inspires awe and astonishment. How dear, how soothing to man, arises the idea of God, peopling the lonely place, effacing the scars of our mistakes and  
 20 disappointments! When we have broken our god of tradition, and ceased from our god of rhetoric, then may God fire the heart with his presence. It is the doubling of the heart itself, nay, the infinite enlargement of the heart with a power of growth to a new infinity on every side. It inspires in man an infallible trust. He has not the conviction, but the sight, that the best is the  
 25 true, and may in that thought easily dismiss all particular uncertainties and fears, and adjourn to the sure revelation of time, the solution of his private riddles. He is sure that his welfare is dear to the heart of being. In the presence of law to his mind, he is overflowed with a reliance so universal, that it sweeps away all cherished hopes and the most stable projects of mortal condition in  
 30 its flood. He believes that he cannot escape from his good. The things that are really for thee gravitate to thee. You are running to seek your friend. Let your feet run, but your mind need not. If you do not find him, will you not acquiesce that it is best you should not find him? for there is a power, which, as it is in you, is in him also, and could therefore very well bring you  
 35 together, if it were for the best. You are preparing with eagerness to go and render a service to which your talent and your taste invite you, the love of men and the hope of fame. Has it not occurred to you, that you have no right to go, unless you are equally willing to be prevented from going? O, believe, as thou livest, that every sound that is spoken over the round world, which thou  
 40 oughtest to hear, will vibrate on thine ear! Every proverb, every book, every byword that belongs to thee for aid or comfort, shall surely come home through open or winding passages. Every friend whom not thy fantastic will, but the great and tender heart in thee craveth, shall lock thee in his embrace. And

3-4. **Cromwell . . . Turk**—The references are all clear except perhaps for two. Queen Christina of Sweden (1626-1689), daughter of Gustavus Adolphus, was notable for her patronage of men of learning and for her eccentricities. The Grand Turk refers to the Sultan of Turkey.  
 13. "highest praising"—from the fourth paragraph of Milton's *Areopagitica*.

this, because the heart in thee is the heart of all; not a valve, not a wall, not an intersection is there anywhere in nature, but one blood rolls uninterruptedly an endless circulation through all men, as the water of the globe is all one sea, and, truly seen, its tide is one.

Let man, then, learn the revelation of all nature and all thought to his heart; 5  
this, namely; that the Highest dwells with him; that the sources of nature are in his own mind, if the sentiment of duty is there. But if he would know what the great God speaketh, he must 'go into his closet and shut the door,' as Jesus said. God will not make himself manifest to cowards. He must greatly listen to himself, withdrawing himself from all the accents of other men's devotion. Even their prayers are hurtful to him, until he have made his own. 10  
Our religion vulgarly stands on numbers of believers. Whenever the appeal is made—no matter how indirectly—to numbers, proclamation is then and there made, that religion is not. He that finds God a sweet, enveloping thought to him never counts his company. When I sit in that presence, who shall dare to 15  
come in? When I rest in perfect humility, when I burn with pure love, what can Calvin or Swedenborg say?

It makes no difference whether the appeal is to numbers or to one. The faith that stands on authority is not faith. The reliance on authority measures the decline of religion, the withdrawal of the soul. The position men have 20  
given to Jesus, now for many centuries of history, is a position of authority. It characterizes themselves. It cannot alter the eternal facts. Great is the soul, and plain. It is no flatterer, it is no follower; it never appeals from itself. It believes in itself. Before the immense possibilities of man, all mere experience, all past biography, however spotless and sainted, shrinks away. Before that 25  
heaven which our presentiments foreshow us, we cannot easily praise any form of life we have seen or read of. We not only affirm that we have few great men, but, absolutely speaking, that we have none; that we have no history, no record of any character or mode of living, that entirely contents us. The saints and demigods whom history worships we are constrained to accept with a 30  
grain of allowance. Though in our lonely hours we draw a new strength out of their memory, yet, pressed on our attention, as they are by the thoughtless and customary, they fatigue and invade. The soul gives itself, alone, original, and pure, to the Lonely, Original, and Pure, who, on that condition, gladly inhabits, leads, and speaks through it. Then is it glad, young, and nimble. It 35  
is not wise, but it sees through all things. It is not called religious, but it is innocent. It calls the light its own, and feels that the grass grows and the stone falls by a law inferior to, and dependent on, its nature. Behold, it saith, I am born into the great, the universal mind. I, the imperfect, adore my own Perfect. I am somehow receptive of the great soul, and thereby I do overlook the 40  
sun and the stars, and feel them to be the fair accidents and effects which change and pass. More and more the surges of everlasting nature enter into me, and I become public and human in my regards and actions. So come I to live in thoughts, and act with energies, which are immortal. Thus revering the soul, and learning, as the ancient said, that "its beauty is immense," man 45

8. 'go . . . door'—*Cf.* Matt. 6:6. 17. Calvin—John Calvin (1509-1564), Swiss theologian, the founder of Presbyterian theology.

- will come to see that the world is the perennial miracle which the soul worketh, and be less astonished at particular wonders; he will learn that there is no profane history; that all history is sacred; that the universe is represented in an atom, in a moment of time. He will weave no longer a spotted life of  
 5 shreds and patches, but he will live with a divine unity. He will cease from what is base and frivolous in his life, and be content with all places and with any service he can render. He will calmly front the morrow in the negligency of that trust which carries God with it and so hath already the whole future in the bottom of the heart.

## THE POET

"The Poet" first appeared in the second series of *Essays*, published in 1844, of which there was a second edition in 1850. The present text is from this second edition. The importance of the essay lies in the theoretical relation between art and the transcendental philosophy which it embodies. As elsewhere is the case with Emerson's essays, filaments run backward and forward between this essay and the poems, the journals, and other prose compositions.

Emerson preceded the essay by two poetical mottoes, as follows:

A moody child and wildly wise  
 Pursued the game with joyful eyes,  
 Which chose, like meteors, their way,  
 And rived the dark with private ray:  
 They overleapt the horizon's edge,  
 Searched with Apollo's privilege;  
 Through man, and woman, and sea, and star,  
 Saw the dance of nature forward far;  
 Through worlds, and races, and terms, and times,  
 Saw musical order, and pairing rhymes.

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Olympian bards who sung  
 Divine ideas below,  
 Which always find us young,  
 And always keep us so.

- 10 **T**HOSE who are esteemed umpires of taste, are often persons who have acquired some knowledge of admired pictures of sculptures, and have an inclination for whatever is elegant; but if you inquire whether they are beautiful souls, and whether their own acts are like fair pictures, you learn that they are selfish and sensual. Their cultivation is local, as if you should  
 15 rub a log of dry wood in one spot to produce fire, all the rest remaining cold. Their knowledge of the fine arts is some study of rules and particulars, or some limited judgment of color or form, which is exercised for amusement or for show. It is a proof of the shallowness of the doctrine of beauty, as it lies in the minds of our amateurs, that men seem to have lost the perception of the instant

19. amateurs—connoisseurs. 19. instant—immediate.

dependence of form upon soul. There is no doctrine of forms in our philosophy. We were put into our bodies, as fire is put into a pan, to be carried about; but there is no accurate adjustment between the spirit and the organ, much less is the latter the germination of the former. So in regard to other forms, the intellectual men do not believe in any essential dependence of the material world on thought and volition. Theologians think it a pretty air-castle to talk of the spiritual meaning of a ship or a cloud, of a city or a contract, but they prefer to come again to the solid ground of historical evidence; and even the poets are contented with a civil and conformed manner of living, and to write poems from the fancy, at a safe distance from their own experience. But the highest minds of the world have never ceased to explore the double meaning, or, shall I say, the quadruple, or the centuple, or much more manifold meaning, of every sensuous fact: Orpheus, Empedocles, Heraclitus, Plato, Plutarch, Dante, Swedenborg, and the masters of sculpture, picture, and poetry. For we are not pans and barrows, nor even porters of the fire and torch-bearers, but children of the fire, made of it, and only the same divinity transmuted, and at two or three removes, when we know least about it. And this hidden truth, that the fountains whence all this river of Time, and its creatures, floweth, are intrinsically ideal and beautiful, draws us to the consideration of the nature and functions of the Poet, or the man of Beauty, to the means and materials he uses, and to the general aspect of the art in the present time.

The breadth of the problem is great, for the poet is representative. He stands among partial men for the complete man, and apprises us not of his wealth, but of the commonwealth. The young man reveres men of genius, because, to speak truly, they are more himself than he is. They receive of the soul as he also receives, but they more. Nature enhances her beauty, to the eye of loving men, from their belief that the poet is beholding her shows at the same time. He is isolated among his contemporaries, by truth and by his art, but with this consolation in his pursuits, that they will draw all men sooner or later. For all men live by truth, and stand in need of expression. In love, in art, in avarice, in politics, in labor, in games, we study to utter our painful secret. The man is only half himself, the other half is his expression.

Notwithstanding this necessity to be published, adequate expression is rare. I know not how it is that we need an interpreter; but the great majority of men seem to be minors, who have not yet come into possession of their own, or mutes, who cannot report the conversation they have had with nature. There is no man who does not anticipate a super-sensual utility in the sun, and stars, earth, and water. These stand and wait to render him a peculiar service. But there is some obstruction, or some excess of phlegm in our constitution, which does not suffer them to yield the due effect. Too feeble fall the im-

2. **fire . . . pan**—Before matches became cheap and common, it was customary in New England, in case the fire went out, to fetch coals in a pan from a neighbor's to rekindle the fire. 13. **Orpheus**—in Greek legend the inspired poet and singer who moved rocks and trees with his music. 13. **Empedocles**—fifth-century Greek philosopher. Cf. Matthew Arnold's poem, *Empedocles on Etna*. 13. **Heraclitus**—Heraclitus (540-475 B.C.), Greek philosopher, and one of the founders of metaphysical inquiry. The other references are clear except possibly that to Plutarch (46-120 A.D.), the "father" of biography. 15-16. **children of the fire**—an oblique reference to the Greek myth that makes Prometheus bring down fire from heaven and so rescue men from their brutish state. 21. **the art**—"his art" in the Concord edition.



pressions of nature on us to make us artists. Every touch should thrill. Every man should be so much an artist, that he could report in conversation what had befallen him. Yet, in our experience, the rays or appulses have sufficient force to arrive at the senses, but not enough to reach the quick, and compel the reproduction of themselves in speech. The poet is the person in whom these powers  
 5 are in balance, the man without impediment, who sees and handles that which others dream of, traverses the whole scale of experience, and is representative of man, in virtue of being the largest power to receive and to impart.

For the Universe has three children, born at one time, which reappear,  
 10 under different names, in every system of thought, whether they be called cause, operation, and effect; or, more poetically, Jove, Pluto, Neptune; or, theologically, the Father, the Spirit, and the Son; but which we will call here the Knower, the Doer, and the Sayer. These stand respectively for the love of truth, for the love of good, and for the love of beauty. These three are equal.  
 15 Each is that which he is essentially, so that he cannot be surmounted or analyzed, and each of these three has the power of the others latent in him, and his own patent.

The poet is the sayer, the namer, and represents beauty. He is a sovereign, and stands on the centre. For the world is not painted or adorned, but is from  
 20 the beginning beautiful; and God has not made some beautiful things, but Beauty is the creator of the universe. Therefore the poet is not any permissive potentate, but is emperor in his own right. Criticism is infested with a cant of materialism, which assumes that manual skill and activity is the first merit of all men, and disparages such as say and do not, overlooking the fact, that  
 25 some men, namely, poets, are natural sayers, sent into the world to the end of expression, and confounds them with those whose province is action, but who quit it to imitate the sayers. But Homer's words are as costly and admirable to Homer, as Agamemnon's victories are to Agamemnon. The poet does not wait for the hero or the sage, but, as they act and think primarily, so he writes  
 30 primarily what will and must be spoken, reckoning the others, though primaries also, yet, in respect to him, secondaries and servants; as sitters or models in the studio of a painter, or as assistants who bring building materials to an architect.

For poetry was all written before time was, and whenever we are so finely  
 35 organized that we can penetrate into that region where the air is music, we hear those primal warblings, and attempt to write them down, but we lose ever and anon a word, or a verse, and substitute something of our own, and thus miswrite the poem. The men of more delicate ear write down these cadences more faithfully, and these transcripts, though imperfect, become the  
 40 songs of the nations. For nature is as truly beautiful as it is good, or as it is reasonable, and must as much appear, as it must be done, or be known. Words and deeds are quite indifferent modes of the divine energy. Words are also actions, and actions are a kind of words.

3. **appulses**—impulses from without. 11. **Jove . . . Neptune**—The identification of the classic deities in question with the Christian Trinity seems to be peculiar to Emerson, and somewhat fantastic. 21. **permissive**—optional. 28. **Homer . . . Agamemnon**—a variant of a phrase as old as Horace, who said that, though brave men were living before Agamemnon, Homer preserved the fame of the latter.

The sign and credentials of the poet are, that he announces that which no man foretold. He is the true and only doctor; he knows and tells; he is the only teller of news, for he was present and privy to the appearance which he describes. He is a beholder of ideas, and an utterer of the necessary and causal. For we do not speak now of men of poetical talents, or of industry and skill in metre, but of the true poet. I took part in a conversation, the other day, concerning a recent writer of lyrics, a man of subtle mind, whose head appeared to be a music-box of delicate tunes and rhythms, and whose skill, and command of language, we could not sufficiently praise. But when the question arose, whether he was not only a lyrist, but a poet, we were obliged to confess that he is plainly a contemporary, not an eternal man. He does not stand out of our low limitations, like a Chimborazo under the line, running up from a torrid base through all the climates of the globe, with belts of the herbage of every latitude on its high and mottled sides; but this genius is the landscape-garden of a modern house, adorned with fountains and statues, with well-bred men and women standing and sitting in the walks and terraces. We hear, through all the varied music, the ground-tone of conventional life. Our poets are men of talents who sing, and not the children of music. The argument is secondary, the finish of the verses is primary.

For it is not metres, but a metre-making argument, that makes a poem,—a thought so passionate and alive, that, like the spirit of a plant or an animal, it has an architecture of its own, and adorns nature with a new thing. The thought and the form are equal in the order of time, but in the order of genesis the thought is prior to the form. The poet has a new thought: he has a whole new experience to unfold; he will tell us how it was with him, and all men will be the richer in his fortune. For the experience of each new age requires a new confession, and the world seems always waiting for its poet. I remember, when I was young, how much I was moved one morning by tidings that genius had appeared in a youth who sat near me at table. He had left his work, and gone rambling none knew whither, and had written hundreds of lines, but could not tell whether that which was in him was therein told: he could tell nothing but that all was changed,—man, beast, heaven, earth, and sea. How gladly we listened! how credulous! Society seemed to be compromised. We sat in the aurora of a sunrise which was to put out all the stars. Boston seemed to be at twice the distance it had the night before, or was much farther than that. Rome,—what was Rome? Plutarch and Shakspeare were in the yellow leaf, and Homer no more should be heard of. It is much to know that poetry has been written this very day, under this very roof, by your side. What! that wonderful spirit has not expired! these stony moments are still sparkling and animated! I had fancied that the oracles were all silent, and nature had spent her fires; and behold! all night, from every pore, these fine auroras have been streaming. Every one has some interest in the advent

2. doctor—*doctus*, learned, or expert, man. 12. Chimborazo under the line—one of the highest peaks in the Andes, near the equator (line), and long supposed to be the highest mountain in the world. It came into literary prominence through the explorations and reports of Humboldt. 34. aurora—dawn, albeit in line 42 the same word seems to be used with reference to the aurora borealis or northern lights. 37. yellow leaf—*Cf. Macbeth*, Act V, scene 3, line 23.

of the poet, and no one knows how much it may concern him. We know that the secret of the world is profound, but who or what shall be our interpreter, we know not. A mountain ramble, a new style of face, a new person, may put the key into our hands. Of course, the value of genius to us is in the veracity of its report. Talent may frolic and juggle; genius realizes and adds. Mankind, in good earnest, have availed so far in understanding themselves and their work, that the foremost watchman on the peak announces his news. It is the truest word ever spoken, and the phrase will be the fittest, most musical, and the unerring voice of the world for that time.

- 10 All that we call sacred history attests that the birth of a poet is the principal event in chronology. Man, never so often deceived, still watches for the arrival of a brother who can hold him steady to a truth, until he has made it his own. With what joy I begin to read a poem, which I confide in as an inspiration! And now my chains are to be broken; I shall mount above these clouds and  
15 opaque airs in which I live,—opaque, though they seem transparent,—and from the heaven of truth I shall see and comprehend my relations. That will reconcile me to life, and renovate nature, to see trifles animated by a tendency, and to know what I am doing. Life will no more be a noise; now I shall see men and women, and know the signs by which they may be discerned from  
20 fools and satans. This day shall be better than my birth-day: then I became an animal: now I am invited into the science of the real. Such is the hope, but the fruition is postponed. Oftener it falls, that this winged man, who will carry me into the heaven, whirls me into mists, then leaps and frisks about with me as it were from cloud to cloud, still affirming that he is bound heavenward; and  
25 I, being myself a novice, am slow in perceiving that he does not know the way into the heavens, and is merely bent that I should admire his skill to rise, like a fowl or a flying fish, a little way from the ground or the water; but the all-piercing, all-feeding, and ocular air of heaven, that man shall never inhabit. I tumble down again soon into my old nooks, and lead the life of  
30 exaggerations as before, and have lost my faith in the possibility of any guide who can lead me thither where I would be.

- But, leaving these victims of vanity, let us, with new hope, observe how nature, by worthier impulses, has insured the poet's fidelity to his office of announcement and affirming, namely, by the beauty of things, which becomes  
35 a new and higher beauty, when expressed. Nature offers all her creatures to him as a picture-language. Being used as a type, a second wonderful value appears in the object, far better than its old value, as the carpenter's stretched cord, if you hold your ear close enough, is musical in the breeze. "Things more excellent than every image," says Jamblichus, "are expressed through images."  
40 Things admit of being used as symbols, because nature is a symbol, in the whole, and in every part. Every line we can draw in the sand, has expression; and

6. *availed*—The Concord edition reads "gone." 17. *trifles* . . . *tendency*—to see the eternal purposes underlying phenomenal events. 20. *satans*—that is, fallen beings. 21. *science*—knowledge. 28. *ocular*—visible. 35. *Nature*—Cf. *Nature*, p. 403 37-38. *carpenter's stretched cord*—A chalked cord is used by carpenters to mark a straight line. It is stretched taut and then snapped against the plank to be marked. 39. *Jamblichus*—Jamblichus (died 330?), a Syrian philosopher, and one of the most extreme of the Neo-Platonists.

there is no body without its spirit or genius. All form is an effect of character; all condition, of the quality of the life; all harmony, of health; (and, for this reason, a perception of beauty should be sympathetic, or proper only to the good.) The beautiful rests on the foundations of the necessary. The soul makes the body, as the wise Spenser teaches:

"So every spirit, as it is most pure,  
And hath in it the more of heavenly light,  
So it the fairer body doth procure  
To habit in, and it more fairly dight,  
With cheerful grace and amiable sight.  
For, of the soul, the body form doth take,  
For soul is form, and doth the body make."

Here we find ourselves, suddenly, not in a critical speculation, but in a holy place, and should go very warily and reverently. We stand before the secret of the world, there where Being passes into Appearance, and Unity into Variety.

The Universe is the externization of the soul. Wherever the life is, that bursts into appearance around it. Our science is sensual, and therefore superficial. The earth and the heavenly bodies, physics, and chemistry, we sensually treat, as if they were self-existent; but these are the retinue of that Being we have. "The mighty heaven," said Proclus, "exhibits, in its transfigurations, clear images of the splendor of intellectual perceptions; being moved in conjunction with the unapparent periods of intellectual natures." Therefore, science always goes abreast with the just elevation of the man, keeping step with religion and metaphysics; or, the state of science is an index of our self-knowledge. Since everything in nature answers to a moral power, if any phenomenon remains brute and dark, it is because the corresponding faculty in the observer is not yet active.

No wonder, then, if these waters be so deep, that we hover over them with a religious regard. The beauty of the fable proves the importance of the sense; to the poet, and to all others; or, if you please, every man is so far a poet as to be susceptible of these enchantments of nature; for all men have the thoughts whereof the universe is the celebration. I find that the fascination resides in the symbol. Who loves nature? Who does not? Is it only poets, and men of leisure and cultivation, who live with her? No; but also hunters, farmers, grooms, and butchers, though they express their affection in their choice of life, and not in their choice of words. The writer wonders what the coachman or the hunter values in riding, in horses, and dogs. It is not superficial qualities. When you talk with him, he holds these at as slight a rate as you. His worship is sympathetic; he has no definitions, but he is commanded in nature, by the living power which he feels to be there present. No imitation, or playing of these things, would content him; he loves the earnest of the north wind, of rain,

1. **effect**—The Concord edition reads "effort." 6-12. "**So . . . make**"—from "An Hymne in Honour of Beautie" by Edmund Spenser, lines 127-33. 18. **sensual**—sensory. 21. **Proclus**—a Greek philosopher (410-485), a disciple of Neo-Platonism. 30. **fable**—that is, poetical subject. 40. **is sympathetic**—that is, is due to a secret sympathy between himself and nature. 42. **earnest**—pledge.

of stone, and wood, and iron. A beauty not explicable is dearer than a beauty which we can see to the end of. It is nature the symbol, nature certifying the supernatural, body overflowed by life, which he worships, with coarse, but sincere rites.

- 5 The inwardness and mystery of this attachment drives men of every class to the use of emblems. The schools of poets, and philosophers, are not more intoxicated with their symbols, than the populace with theirs. In our political parties, compute the power of badges and emblems. See the great ball which they roll from Baltimore to Bunker Hill! In the political processions, Lowell  
10 goes in a loom, and Lynn in a shoe, and Salem in a ship. Witness the cider-barrel, the log-cabin, the hickory-stick, the palmetto, and all the cognizances of party. See the power of national emblems. Some stars, lilies, leopards, a crescent, a lion, an eagle, or other figure, which came into credit God knows how, on an old rag of bunting, blowing in the wind, on a fort, at the ends of the earth,  
15 shall make the blood tingle under the rudest, or the most conventional exterior. The people fancy they hate poetry, and they are all poets and mystics!

- Beyond this universality of the symbolic language, we are apprised of the divineness of this superior use of things, whereby the world is a temple whose walls are covered with emblems, pictures, and commandments of the Deity, in  
20 this, that there is no fact in nature which does not carry the whole sense of nature; and the distinctions which we make in events, and in affairs, of low and high, honest and base, disappear when nature is used as a symbol. Thought makes everything fit for use. The vocabulary of an omniscient man would embrace words and images excluded from polite conversation. What would be  
25 base, or even obscene, to the obscene, becomes illustrious, spoken in a new connection of thought. The piety of the Hebrew prophets purges their grossness. The circumcision is an example of the power of poetry to raise the low and offensive. Small and mean things serve as well as great symbols. The meaner the type by which a law is expressed, the more pungent it is, and the more  
30 lasting in the memories of men: just as we choose the smallest box, or case, in which any needful utensil can be carried. Bare lists of words are found suggestive, to an imaginative and excited mind; as it is related of Lord Chatham, that he was accustomed to read in Bailey's Dictionary, when he was preparing to speak in Parliament. The poorest experience is rich enough for all the  
35 purposes of expressing thought. Why covet a knowledge of new facts? Day and night, house and garden, a few books, a few actions, serve us as well as would all trades and all spectacles. We are far from having exhausted the significance of the few symbols we use. We can come to use them yet with a terrible simplicity. It does not need that a poem should be long. Every word

9. **processions**—The references here are to the parades which distinguished the election that sent Harrison and Tyler ("Tippecanoe and Tyler too") to the White House, in 1840. Lowell was early distinguished for textile industries, Lynn for the manufacture of shoes, and Salem was the port of the Yankee clipper-built sailing vessels. The cider barrel and the log cabin were especially associated with Harrison, the hickory stick with Andrew Jackson, the palmetto with South Carolina, and therefore with Calhoun. 12. **national emblems**—Those listed are the American stars, the lilies of Bourbon France, the royal leopards of Scotland, the Turkish crescent, the British lion, the American eagle. 27. **circumcision**—Cf. especially Luke 2:21. 32. **Lord Chatham**—William Pitt (1708-1778). 33. **Bailey's Dictionary**—*The Universal Etymological English Dictionary*, 1721, by Nathan Bailey (died 1742).

was once a poem. Every new relation is a new word. Also, we use defects and deformities to a sacred purpose, so expressing our sense that the evils of the world are such only to the evil eye. In the old mythology, mythologists observe, defects are ascribed to divine natures, as lameness to Vulcan, blindness to Cupid, and the like, to signify exuberances.

For, as it is dislocation and detachment from the life of God, that makes things ugly, the poet, who re-attaches things to nature and the Whole,—re-attaching even artificial things, and violations of nature, to nature, by a deeper insight,—disposes very easily of the most disagreeable facts. Readers of poetry see the factory-village and the railway, and fancy that the poetry of the landscape is broken up by these; for these works of art are not yet consecrated in their reading; but the poet sees them fall within the great Order not less than the bee-hive or the spider's geometrical web. Nature adopts them very fast into her vital circles, and the gliding train of cars she loves like her own. Besides, in a centred mind, it signifies nothing how many mechanical inventions you exhibit. Though you add millions, and never so surprising, the fact of mechanics has not gained a grain's weight. The spiritual fact remains unalterable, by many or by few particulars; as no mountain is of any appreciable height to break the curve of the sphere. A shrewd country-boy goes to the city for the first time, and the complacent citizen is not satisfied with his little wonder. It is not that he does not see all the fine houses, and know that he never saw such before, but he disposes of them as easily as the poet finds place for the railway. The chief value of the new fact, is to enhance the great and constant fact of Life, which can dwarf any and every circumstance, and to which the belt of wampum, and the commerce of America, are alike.

The world being thus put under the mind for verb and noun, the poet is he who can articulate it. For, though life is great, and fascinates, and absorbs,—and though all men are intelligent of the symbols through which it is named,—yet they cannot originally use them. We are symbols, and inhabit symbols; workmen, work, and tools, words and things, birth and death, all are emblems; but we sympathize with the symbols, and, being infatuated with the economical uses of things, we do not know that they are thoughts. The poet, by an ulterior intellectual perception, gives them a power which makes their old use forgotten, and puts eyes, and a tongue, into every dumb and inanimate object. He perceives the independence of the thought on the symbol, the stability of the thought, the accidenty and fugacity of the symbol. As the eyes of Lyncaeus were said to see through the earth, so the poet turns the world to glass, and shows us all things in their right series and procession. For, through that better perception, he stands one step nearer to things, and sees the flowing or metamorphosis; perceives that thought is multiform; that within the form of every creature is a force impelling it to ascend into a higher form: and, following with his eyes the life, uses the forms which express that life, and so his speech

**25. belt of wampum**—Shell beads, braided into a belt, served as currency among the North American Indians. **27. articulate**—enunciate, put in words. **28. intelligent of**—are aware of, understand. This whole passage should be compared with Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*. **31. economical**—orderly. Cf. p. 476, line 1. **36. accidenty**—accidental quality, factitious. **36. fugacity**—flying quality, fugitive. **36. Lyncaeus**—in Greek mythology, one of the heroes who went in quest of the Golden Fleece, and who was gifted with marvelous eyesight. **38. procession**—proceeding out of.

flows with the flowing of nature. All the facts of the animal economy, sex, nutriment, gestation, birth, growth, are symbols of the passage of the world into the soul of man, to suffer there a change, and reappear a new and higher fact. He uses forms according to the life, and not according to the form. This  
 5 is true science. The poet alone knows astronomy, chemistry, vegetation, and animation, for he does not stop at these facts, but employs them as signs. He knows why the plain or meadow of space was strown with these flowers we call suns, and moons, and stars; why the great deep is adorned with animals, with men, and gods; for, in every word he speaks he rides on them as the horses  
 10 of thought.

By virtue of this science the poet is the Namer or Language-maker, naming things sometimes after their appearance, sometimes after their essence, and giving to every one its own name and not another's, thereby rejoicing the intellect, which delights in detachment or boundary. The poets made all the  
 15 words, and therefore language is the archives of history, and, if we must say it, a sort of tomb of the muses. For, though the origin of most of our words is forgotten, each word was at first a stroke of genius, and obtained currency, because for the moment it symbolized the world to the first speaker and to the hearer. The etymologist finds the deadest word to have been once a  
 20 brilliant picture. Language is fossil poetry. As the limestone of the continent consists of infinite masses of the shells of animalcules, so language is made up of images, or tropes, which now, in their secondary use, have long ceased to remind us of their poetic origin. But the poet names the thing because he sees it, or comes one step nearer to it than any other. This expression, or naming,  
 25 is not art, but a second nature, grown out of the first, as a leaf out of a tree. What we call nature, is a certain self-regulated motion, or change; and nature does all things by her own hands, and does not leave another to baptize her, but baptizes herself; and this through the metamorphosis again. I remember that a certain poet described it to me thus:

30 Genius is the activity which repairs the decays of things, whether wholly or partly of a material and finite kind. Nature, through all her kingdoms, insures herself. Nobody cares for planting the poor fungus: so she shakes down from the gills of one agaric countless spores, any one of which, being preserved, transmits new billions of spores to-morrow or next day. The new agaric of this  
 35 hour has a chance which the old one had not. This atom of seed is thrown into a new place, not subject to the accidents which destroyed its parent two rods off. She makes a man; and having brought him to ripe age, she will no longer run the risk of losing this wonder at a blow, but she detaches from him a new self, that the kind may be safe from accidents to which the individual  
 40 is exposed. So when the soul of the poet has come to ripeness of thought, she detaches and sends away from it its poems or songs,—a fearless, sleepless, deathless progeny, which is not exposed to the accidents of the weary kingdom of time: a fearless, vivacious offspring, clad with wings (such was the virtue of the soul out of which they came), which carry them fast and far, and infix them

21. **animalcules**—minute animals. 22. **tropes**—figures of speech. 29. **certain poet**—that is, Emerson himself in his "orphic" capacity. 33. **agaric**—a kind of fungus.

irrecoverably into the hearts of men. These wings are the beauty of the poet's soul. The songs, thus flying immortal from their mortal parent, are pursued by clamorous flights of censures, which swarm in far greater numbers, and threaten to devour them; but these last are not winged. At the end of a very short leap they fall plump down, and rot, having received from the souls out of which they came no beautiful wings. But the melodies of the poet ascend, and leap, and pierce into the deeps of infinite time. 5

So far the bard taught me, using his freer speech. But nature has a higher end, in the production of new individuals, than security, namely, *ascension*, or, the passage of the soul into higher forms. I knew, in my younger days, the sculptor who made the statue of the youth which stands in the public garden. He was, as I remember, unable to tell directly, what made him happy, or unhappy, but by wonderful indirections he could tell. He rose one day, according to his habit, before the dawn, and saw the morning break, grand as the eternity out of which it came, and, for many days after, he strove to express this tranquillity, and, lo! his chisel had fashioned out of marble the form of a beautiful youth, Phosphorus, whose aspect is such, that, it is said, all persons who look on it become silent. The poet also resigns himself to his mood, and that thought which agitated him is expressed, but *alter idem*, in a manner totally new. The expression is organic, or, the new type which things themselves take when liberated. As, in the sun, objects paint their images on the retina of the eye, so they, sharing the aspiration of the whole universe, tend to paint a far more delicate copy of their essence in his mind. Like the metamorphosis of things into higher organic forms, is their change into melodies. Over everything stands its daemon, or soul, and, as the form of the thing is reflected by the eye, so the soul of the thing is reflected by a melody. The sea, the mountain-ridge, Niagara, and every flower-bed, pre-exist, or super-exist, in precantations, which sail like odors in the air, and when any man goes by with an ear sufficiently fine, he overhears them, and endeavors to write down the notes, without diluting or depraving them. And herein is the legitimation of criticism, in the mind's faith, that the poems are a corrupt version of some text in nature, with which they ought to be made to tally. A rhyme in one of our sonnets should not be less pleasing than the iterated nodes of a sea-shell, or the resembling difference of a group of flowers. The pairing of the birds is an idyl, not tedious as our idyls are; a tempest is a rough ode, without falsehood or rant: a summer, with its harvest sown, reaped, and stored, is an epic song, subordinating how many admirably executed parts. Why should not the symmetry and truth that modulate these, glide into our spirits, and we participate the invention of nature? 10 15 20 25 30 35

This insight, which expresses itself by what is called Imagination, is a very high sort of seeing, which does not come by study, but by the intellect being where and what it sees, by sharing the path or circuit of things through forms, 40

1. *irrecoverably*—"irrevocably" in the Concord edition. 17. *Phosphorus*—the morning star. 19. *alter idem*—in altered form, yet the same. 25. *daemon*—spirit. 27. *super-exist*—exist in eternal forms. 28. *precantations*—prophecies too fine for mortal ear. 33. *iterated*—repeated. 33. *nodes*—swellings.



and so making them translucent to others. The path of things is silent. Will they suffer a speaker to go with them? A spy they will not suffer; a lover, a poet, is the transcendency of their own nature,—him they will suffer. The condition of true naming, on the poet's part, is his resigning himself to the

5 divine *aura* which breathes through forms, and accompanying that.

It is a secret which every intellectual man quickly learns, that, beyond the energy of his possessed and conscious intellect, he is capable of a new energy (as of an intellect doubled on itself), by abandonment to the nature of things; that, beside his privacy of power as an individual man, there is a great public

10 power, on which he can draw, by unlocking, at all risks, his human doors, and suffering the ethereal tides to roll and circulate through him: then he is caught up into the life of the Universe, his speech is thunder, his thought is law, and his words are universally intelligible as the plants and animals. The poet knows that he speaks adequately, then, only when he speaks somewhat

15 wildly, or, "with the flower of the mind;" not with the intellect, used as an organ, but with the intellect released from all service, and suffered to take its direction from its celestial life; or, as the ancients were wont to express themselves, not with intellect alone, but with the intellect inebriated by nectar. As the traveller who has lost his way, throws his reins on his horse's neck, and

20 trusts to the instinct of the animal to find his road, so must we do with the divine animal who carries us through this world. For if in any manner we can stimulate this instinct, new passages are opened for us into nature, the mind flows into and through things hardest and highest, and the metamorphosis is possible.

25 This is the reason why bards love wine, mead, narcotics, coffee, tea, opium, the fumes of sandal-wood and tobacco, or whatever other procurers of animal exhilaration. All men avail themselves of such means as they can, to add this extraordinary power to their normal powers; and to this end they prize conversation, music, pictures, sculpture, dancing, theatres, travelling, war, mobs,

30 fires, gaming, politics, or love, or science, or animal intoxication, which are several coarser or finer *quasi*-mechanical substitutes for the true nectar, which is the ravishment of the intellect by coming nearer to the fact. These are auxiliaries to the centrifugal tendency of a man, to his passage out into free space, and they help him to escape the custody of that body in which he is

35 pent up, and of that jail-yard of individual relations in which he is enclosed. Hence a great number of such as were professionally expressers of Beauty, as painters, poets, musicians, and actors, have been more than others wont to lead a life of pleasure and indulgence; all but the few who received the true nectar; and, as it was a spurious mode of attaining freedom, as it was an

40 emancipation not into the heavens, but into the freedom of baser places, they were punished for that advantage they won, by a dissipation and deterioration. But never can any advantage be taken of nature by a trick. The spirit of the world, the great calm presence of the Creator, comes not forth to the sorceries of opium or of wine. The sublime vision comes to the pure and simple soul in

5. *aura*—subtle emanation. 18. *nectar*—in Greek mythology, the drink of the gods. 21. *this world*—The Concord edition reads "the world." 25. *mead*—an alcoholic drink compounded from honey and water. 33. *centrifugal*—tending to fly from the center.

a clean and chaste body. That is not an inspiration which we owe to narcotics, but some counterfeit excitement and fury. Milton says, that the lyric poet may drink wine and live generously, but the epic poet, he who shall sing of the gods, and their descent unto men, must drink water out of a wooden bowl. For poetry is not 'Devil's wine,' but God's wine. It is with this as it is with toys. We fill the hands and nurseries of our children with all manner of dolls, drums, and horses, withdrawing their eyes from the plain face and sufficing objects of nature, the sun, and the moon, the animals, the water, and stones, which should be their toys. So the poet's habit of living should be set on a key so low, that the common influences should delight him. His cheerfulness should be the gift of the sunlight; the air should suffice for his inspiration, and he should be tipsy with water. That spirit which suffices quiet hearts, which seems to come forth to such from every dry knoll of sere grass, from every pine-stump, and half-imbedded stone, on which the dull March sun shines, comes forth to the poor and hungry, and such as are of simple taste. If thou fill thy brain with Boston and New York, with fashion and covetousness, and wilt stimulate thy jaded senses with wine and French coffee, thou shalt find no radiance of wisdom in the lonely waste of the pinewoods.

If the imagination intoxicates the poet, it is not inactive in other men. The metamorphosis excites in the beholder an emotion of joy. The use of symbols has a certain power of emancipation and exhilaration for all men. We seem to be touched by a wand, which makes us dance and run about happily, like children. We are like persons who come out of a cave or cellar into the open air. This is the effect on us of tropes, fables, oracles, and all poetic forms. Poets are thus liberating gods. Men have really got a new sense, and found within their world, another world, or nest of worlds; for, the metamorphosis once seen, we divine that it does not stop. I will not now consider how much this makes the charm of algebra and the mathematics, which also have their tropes, but it is felt in every definition; as, when Aristotle defines *space* to be an immovable vessel, in which things are contained;—or, when Plato defines a *line* to be a flowing point; or, *figure* to be a bound of solid; and many the like. What a joyful sense of freedom we have, when Vitruvius announces the old opinion of artists that no architect can build any house well, who does not know something of anatomy. When Socrates, in Charmides, tells us that the soul is cured of its maladies by certain incantations, and that these incantations are beautiful reasons, from which temperance is generated in souls; when Plato calls the world an animal; and Timaeus affirms that plants also are animals; or affirms a man to be a heavenly tree, growing with his root, which is his head, upward; and, as George Chapman, following him, writes,—

"So in our tree of man, whose nervie root  
Springs in his top;"

when Orpheus speaks of hoariness as "that white flower which marks extreme

2. Milton—Cf. the "Sixth Latin Elegy," lines 55-78. 32. Vitruvius—See notes 6-7, p. 411. 34. Charmides—one of the dialogues of Plato, as is also *Timaeus* in line 37. 40-41. "So . . . top"—The quotation is from the Dedication to the translation of Homer by George Chapman (about 1559-1634). 42. Orpheus—A number of writings were ascribed to Orpheus as the founder of a religious sect in Greece in the sixth century B.C.

old age," when Proclus calls the universe the statue of the intellect; when Chaucer, in his praise of 'Gentillesse,' compares good blood in mean condition to fire, which, though carried to the darkest house betwixt this and the mount of Caucasus, will yet hold its natural office, and burn as bright as if twenty thousand men did it behold; when John saw, in the Apocalypse, the ruin of the world through evil, and the stars fall from heaven, as the figtree casteth her untimely fruit; when Aesop reports the whole catalogue of common daily relations through the masquerade of birds and beasts;—we take the cheerful hint of the immortality of our essence, and its versatile habits and escapes, as when the gypsies say of themselves, "it is in vain to hang them, they cannot die."

The poets are thus liberating gods. The ancient British bards had for the title of their order, "Those who are free throughout the world." They are free, and they make free. An imaginative book renders us much more service at first, by stimulating us through its tropes, than afterward, when we arrive at the precise sense of the author. I think nothing is of any value in books, excepting the transcendental and extraordinary. If a man is inflamed and carried away by his thought, to that degree that he forgets the authors and the public, and heeds only this one dream, which holds him like an insanity, let me read his paper, and you may have all the arguments and histories and criticism. All the value which attaches to Pythagoras, Paracelsus, Cornelius Agrippa, Cardan, Kepler, Swedenborg, Schelling, Oken, or any other who introduces questionable facts into his cosmogony, as angels, devils, magic, astrology, palmistry, mesmerism, and so on, is the certificate we have of departure from routine, and that here is a new witness. That also is the best success in conversation, the magic of liberty, which puts the world, like a ball, in our hands. How cheap even the liberty then seems; how mean to study, when an emotion communicates to the intellect the power to sap and upheave nature: how great the perspective! nations, times, systems, enter and disappear, like threads in tapestry of large figure and many colors; dream delivers us to dream, and, while the drunkenness lasts, we will sell our bed, our philosophy, our religion, in our opulence.

There is good reason why we should prize this liberation. The fate of the poor shepherd, who, blinded and lost in the snowstorm, perishes in a drift within a few feet of his cottage door, is an emblem of the state of man. On the brink of the waters of life and truth, we are miserably dying. The inaccessibility of every thought but that we are in, is wonderful. What if you come near to it,—you are as remote, when you are nearest as when you are farthest. Every thought is also a prison; every heaven is also a prison. Therefore we love

1. **Proclus**—See note 21, p. 473. 2. '**Gentillesse**'—Emerson refers not to the short poem of Chaucer entitled "Gentillesse," but to the "Wife of Bath's Tale," lines 1130 ff. 5. **John . . . Apocalypse**—Cf. Rev. 6: 13. 21. **Pythagoras**—See note 14, p. 407. 21. **Paracelsus**—Paracelsus (about 1490-1541), German physician and philosopher, accused of magic. 21-22. **Cornelius Agrippa**—(1486-1535) also a German physician and "magician." 22. **Cardan**—Jerome Cardan (1501-1576), Italian mathematician and philosopher, and something of a charlatan. 22. **Kepler**—Johann Kepler (1571-1630), German astronomer and proponent of the Copernican theory. 22. **Schelling**—Friedrich Schelling (1775-1854), German philosopher, one of the transcendental group. 22. **Oken**—Lorenz Oken (1779-1851), German naturalist and philosopher, who foreshadowed modern theories of the cellular structure of organisms. The "protoplasmic basis of life" was still debatable when Emerson wrote.

the poet, the inventor, who in any form, whether in an ode, or in an action, or in looks and behavior, has yielded us a new thought. He unlocks our chains, and admits us to a new scene.

This emancipation is dear to all men, and the power to impart it, as it must come from greater depth and scope of thought, is a measure of intellect. Therefore all books of the imagination endure, all which ascend to that truth, that the writer sees nature beneath him, and uses it as his exponent. Every verse or sentence, possessing this virtue, will take care of its own immortality. The religions of the world are the ejaculations of a few imaginative men.

But the quality of the imagination is to flow, and not to freeze. The poet did not stop at the color, or the form, but read their meaning; neither may he rest in this meaning, but he makes the same objects exponents of his new thought. Here is the difference betwixt the poet and the mystic, that the last nails a symbol to one sense, which was a true sense for a moment, but soon becomes old and false. For all symbols are fluxional; all language is vehicular and transitive, and is good, as ferries and horses are, for conveyance, not as farms and houses are, for homestead. Mysticism consists in the mistake of an accidental and individual symbol for a universal one. The morning-redness happens to be the favorite meteor to the eyes of Jacob Behmen, and comes to stand to him for truth and faith; and he believes should stand for the same realities to every reader. But the first reader prefers as naturally the symbol of a mother and child, or a gardener and his bulb, or a jeweller polishing a gem. Either of these, or of a myriad more, are equally good to the person to whom they are significant. Only they must be held lightly, and be very willingly translated into the equivalent terms which others use. And the mystic must be steadily told,—All that you say is just as true without the tedious use of that symbol as with it. Let us have a little algebra, instead of this trite rhetoric,—universal signs, instead of these village symbols,—and we shall both be gainers. The history of hierarchies seems to show, that all religious error consisted in making the symbol too stark and solid, and, at last, nothing but an excess of the organ of language.

Swedenborg, of all men in the recent ages, stands eminently for the translator of nature into thought. I do not know the man in history to whom things stood so uniformly for words. Before him the metamorphosis continually plays. Every thing on which his eye rests, obeys the impulses of moral nature. The figs become grapes whilst he eats them. When some of his angels affirmed a truth, the laurel twig which they held blossomed in their hands. The noise which, at a distance, appeared like gnashing and thumping, on coming nearer was found to be the voice of disputants. The men, in one of his visions, seen in heavenly light, appeared like dragons, and seemed in darkness: but to each other they appeared as men, and, when the light from heaven shone into their cabin, they complained of the darkness, and were compelled to shut the window that they might see.

There was this perception in him, which makes the poet or seer, an object

15. *vehicular*—a means of conveying. 16. *transitive*—that is, carrying across, as the meaning from speaker to hearer. 19. *Behmen*—See note 9, p. 462. 29. *hierarchies*—systems of priesthood.

of awe and terror, namely, that the same man, or society of men, may wear one aspect to themselves and their companions, and a different aspect to higher intelligences. Certain priests, whom he describes as conversing very learnedly together, appeared to the children, who were at some distance, like dead  
 5 horses; and many the like misappearances. And instantly the mind inquires, whether these fishes under the bridge, yonder oxen in the pasture, those dogs in the yard, are immutably fishes, oxen, and dogs, or only so appear to me, and perchance to themselves appear upright men; and whether I appear as a man to all eyes. The Bramins and Pythagoras propounded the same question,  
 10 and if any poet has witnessed the transformation, he doubtless found it in harmony with various experiences. We have all seen changes as considerable in wheat and caterpillars. He is the poet, and shall draw us with love and terror, who sees, through the flowing vest, the firm nature, and can declare it.

I look in vain for the poet whom I describe. We do not, with sufficient plain-  
 15 ness, or sufficient profoundness, address ourselves to life, nor dare we chaunt our own times and social circumstance. If we filled the day with bravery, we should not shrink from celebrating it. Time and nature yield us many gifts, but not yet the timely man, the new religion, the reconciler, whom all things await. Dante's praise is, that he dared to write his autobiography in colossal cipher,  
 20 or into universality. We have yet had no genius in America, with tyrannous eye, which knew the value of our incomparable materials, and saw, in the barbarism and materialism of the times, another carnival of the same gods whose picture he so much admires in Homer; then in the middle age; then in Calvinism. Banks and tariffs, the newspaper and caucus, methodism and uni-  
 25 tarianism, are flat and dull to dull people, but rest on the same foundations of wonder as the town of Troy, and the temple of Delphos, and are as swiftly passing away. Our logrolling, our stumps and their politics, our fisheries, our Negroes, and Indians, our boats, and our repudiations, the wrath of rogues, and the pusillanimity of honest men, the northern trade, the southern planting,  
 30 the western clearing, Oregon, and Texas, are yet unsung. Yet America is a poem in our eyes; its ample geography dazzles the imagination, and it will not wait long for metres. If I have not found that excellent combination of gifts in my countrymen which I seek, neither could I aid myself to fix the idea of the poet by reading now and then in Chalmers's collection of five centuries  
 35 of English poets. These are wits, more than poets, though there have been poets among them. But when we adhere to the ideal of the poet, we have our difficulties even with Milton and Homer. Milton is too literary, and Homer too literal and historical.

But I am not wise enough for a national criticism, and must use the old

9. **Bramins**—See note 14, p. 407. 26. **Delphos**—"Delphi" in the Concord edition. The oracle at Delphi was supposed to be the voice of Apollo. 30. **Oregon**—In 1843 there was a "Great Immigration" to Oregon, when almost a thousand persons, assembling at Independence, Missouri, crossed the plains and settled in the Columbia River valley. The possession of the region was disputed between Great Britain and the United States. 30. **Texas**—At this time the admission of Texas into the Union was under consideration, but it was not accomplished until 1845. 34. **Chalmers's collection**—a huge collection of the English poets from Chaucer to Cowper in 21 volumes, published in 1810, and edited by Alexander Chalmers (1759-1834). The emphasis of the collection is on poets of the Restoration and the eighteenth century; hence, Emerson's reference to wits in line 35.

largeness a little longer, to discharge my errand from the muse to the poet concerning his art.

Art is the path of the creator to his work. The paths, or methods, are ideal and eternal, though few men ever see them, not the artist himself, for years, or for a lifetime, unless he come into the conditions. The painter, the sculptor, 5 the composer, the epic rhapsodist, the orator, all partake one desire, namely, to express themselves symmetrically and abundantly, not dwarfishly and fragmentarily. They found or put themselves in certain conditions, as, the painter and sculptor before some impressive human figures; the orator, into the assembly of the people; and the others, in such scenes as each has found exciting 10 to his intellect; and each presently feels the new desire. He hears a voice, he sees a beckoning. Then he is apprised, with wonder, what herds of daemons hem him in. He can no more rest; he says, with the old painter, "By God, it is in me, and must go forth of me." He pursues a beauty, half seen, which flies before him. The poet pours out verses in every solitude. Most of the things he 15 says are conventional, no doubt; but by and by he says something which is original and beautiful. That charms him. He would say nothing else but such things. In our way of talking, we say, 'That is yours, this is mine;' but the poet knows well that it is not his; that it is as strange and beautiful to him as to you; he would fain hear the like eloquence at length. Once having tasted 20 this immortal ichor, he cannot have enough of it, and, as an admirable creative power exists in these intellections, it is of the last importance that these things get spoken. What a little of all we know is said! What drops of all the sea of our science are baled up! and by what accident it is that these are exposed, when so many secrets sleep in nature! Hence the necessity of speech and 25 song; hence these throbs and heart-beatings in the orator, at the door of the assembly, to the end, namely, that thought may be ejaculated as Logos, or Word.

Doubt not, O poet, but persist. Say, 'It is in me, and shall out.' Stand there, balked and dumb, stuttering and stammering, hissed and hooted, stand and 30 strive, until, at last, rage draw out of thee that *dream*-power which every night shows thee is thine own; a power transcending all limit and privacy, and by virtue of which a man is the conductor of the whole river of electricity. Nothing walks, or creeps, or grows, or exists, which must not in turn arise and walk before him as exponent of his meaning. Comes he to that power, his 35 genius is no longer exhaustible. All the creatures, by pairs and by tribes, pour into his mind as into a Noah's ark, to come forth again to people a new world. This is like the stock of air for our respiration, or for the combustion of our fireplace, not a measure of gallons, but the entire atmosphere if wanted. And therefore the rich poets, as Homer, Chaucer, Shakspeare, and Raphael, have 40 obviously no limits to their works, except the limits of their lifetime, and resemble a mirror carried through the street, ready to render an image of every created thing.

O poet! a new nobility is conferred in groves and pastures, and not in

21. *ichor*—the blood of the gods. 27. *Logos*—*Cf.* John 1: 1: "In the beginning was the Word [Logos], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." 37. *Noah's Ark*—*Cf.* Gen. 6: 19, 40. *poets*—in the Greek sense of makers, so as to include a painter such as Raphael.

- castles, or by the sword-blade, any longer. The conditions are hard, but equal. Thou shalt leave the world, and know the muse only. Thou shalt not know any longer the times, customs, graces, politics, or opinions of men, but shalt take all from the muse. For the time of towns is tolled from the world by
- 5 funereal chimes, but in nature the universal hours are counted by succeeding tribes of animals and plants, and by growth of joy on joy. God wills also that thou abdicate a manifold and duplex life, and that thou be content that others speak for thee. Others shall be thy gentlemen, and shall represent all courtesy and worldly life for thee; others shall do the great and resounding actions also.
- 10 Thou shalt lie close hid with nature, and canst not be afforded to the Capitol or the Exchange. The world is full of renunciations and apprenticeships, and this is thine; thou must pass for a fool and a churl for a long season. This is the screen and sheath in which Pan has protected his well-beloved flower, and thou shalt be known only to thine own, and they shall console thee with
- 15 tenderest love. And thou shalt not be able to rehearse the names of thy friends in thy verse, for an old shame before the holy ideal. And this is the reward: that the ideal shall be real to thee, and the impressions of the actual world shall fall like summer rain, copious, but not troublesome, to thy invulnerable essence. Thou shalt have the whole land for thy park and manor, the sea for
- 20 thy bath and navigation, without tax and without envy; the woods and the rivers thou shalt own; and thou shalt possess that wherein others are only tenants and boarders. Thou true land-lord! sea-lord! air-lord! Wherever snow falls, or water flows, or birds fly, wherever day and night meet in twilight, wherever the blue heaven is hung by clouds, or sown with stars, wherever
- 25 are forms with transparent boundaries, wherever are outlets into celestial space, wherever is danger, and awe, and love, there is Beauty, plenteous as rain, shed for thee, and though thou shouldst walk the world over, thou shalt not be able to find a condition inopportune or ignoble.

1. **by the sword-blade**—referring to the practice of “dubbing” knights by striking them lightly on the shoulders with a sword when they are ennobled. 13. **Pan**—the Greek god of wild nature.

# NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

1804-1864

## I. A SOLITARY TELLER OF TALES (1804-1850)

- 1804 Born in Salem, Massachusetts, July 4, son of Nathaniel Hathorne, sea captain, and Elizabeth Manning.
- 1816-1820 Lived with widowed mother at Lake Sebago, Maine, with uncle, Richard Manning, and enjoyed outdoor sports.
- 1821-1825 Attended Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, graduating in the class with Longfellow, but intimate only with Horatio Bridge and Franklin Pierce.
- 1825-1839 Lived in Salem in seclusion twelve years. Read voluminously and wrote *Seven Tales of My Native Land*, but destroyed it. Wrote tales for gift books and magazines.
- 1828 Published *Fanshawe*, a failure.
- 1831 Traveled on his uncle's stagecoach service over much of New England.
- 1836 Editor of the *American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge* in Boston.
- 1837 Publication of *Twice-Told Tales*, first series, through efforts of Horatio Bridge, with whom he spent the summer at Augusta, Maine. Review of the book by Longfellow in July *North American Review*.
- 1838 Met Sophia Peabody and was secretly engaged to her.
- 1839-1841 Served in the Boston Custom House. Position secured through George Bancroft, historian.
- 1841 Invested \$1,000 savings in the Brook Farm Community and lived there from April to November. Published *The Whole History of Grandfather's Chair*.
- 1842 Married Sophia Peabody, July 9. Published *Twice-Told Tales*, second series.
- 1842-1846 Lived in the Old Manse at Concord, a neighbor of Emerson and Thoreau, though not congenial with them.
- 1846-1849 Surveyor at Custom House in Salem, Massachusetts, where maritime trade was ebbing. In 1846 published *Mosses from an Old Manse*.

## II. THE ROMANCER (1850-1853)

- 1850 Published *The Scarlet Letter*; in April moved to Lenox, Massachusetts, in the Berkshires. Herman Melville near, not intimate.
- 1851 Published *The House of the Seven Gables*, *The Snow-Image and Other Twice-Told Tales*, and *A Wonder Book for Boys and Girls*.
- 1852-1853 Resided at the Wayside, Concord, though *The Blithedale Romance* was written at West Newton, Massachusetts, near Brook Farm.
- 1852 Published a campaign life of Franklin Pierce.
- 1853 Published *Tanglewood Tales for Girls and Boys*.



## III. THE AMBITIOUS GUEST (1853-1864)

- 1853-1857 Consulship at Liverpool, Pierce's most remunerative appointment. Felt out of place in England.
- 1857-1860 Travel in Italy, meeting the Brownings; and residence at Redcar and Leamington, England.
- 1860 Publication of *Transformation* in England (*The Marble Faun* in the United States), and return to the Wayside.
- 1863 Published *Our Old Home*.
- 1864 Died May 19, at Plymouth, New Hampshire, while on a trip with ex-President Pierce.
- 1864 *The Dolliver Romance*, first part in the *Atlantic Monthly*; the other three parts were published in 1876.
- 1868 *Passages from the American Note-Books* published, edited by Mrs. Hawthorne.
- 1870 *Passages from the English Note-Books* published.
- 1872 *French and Italian Note-Books* published. "Septimius Felton" in the *Atlantic Monthly*.
- 1882-1883 "The Ancestral Footstep" in the *Atlantic Monthly*. Dr. Grimshaw's *Secret* published, though written about 1861.

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Hawthorne was an integral part of the Puritan tradition, as well as the prophet of its decline. His ancestry perhaps caused him to be preoccupied with the problem of sin; but, living at a time when the dogmas of Puritanism were being questioned, he could deal with them imaginatively, rather than didactically. His interpretation was in narrative.

The salient fact about Hawthorne is that he was an artist, an artist with an innate sense of beauty and truth and fitness. He was a keen observer of material phenomena, as his *Note-Books* amply testify, but he was never content until he had pressed beyond the physical fact to the symbol behind it. Romanticism offered the medium through which his genius could best express itself. Viewed through the mists of time, his material suggested more than it revealed; such mental states as pride, isolation, hypocrisy, and avarice took on a significance that is universal and timeless. There are in his tales, to be sure, trappings of Gothic romance; the millers and drunkards are done according to convention; and the story often rambles in a way that requires heavy dependence on situation and scene to hold the reader's interest. But in situations where character is under duress Hawthorne is truly the artist of the beautiful. His notions of the human heart are not distorted, and his psychology is not obsolete. His themes have dignity and are expressed in a style that, coming of a long culture, is always in good taste.

### MR. HIGGINBOTHAM'S CATASTROPHE

Appeared anonymously in the *New England Magazine*, December, 1834. Included in *Twice-Told Tales* (1837). The text of this, and the other selections from Hawthorne, is that of the Riverside edition.

A YOUNG fellow, a tobacco pedlar by trade, was on his way from Morristown, where he had dealt largely with the Deacon of the Shaker settlement, to the village of Parker's Falls, on Salmon River. He had a neat little cart, painted green, with a box of cigars depicted on each side panel, and an Indian chief, holding a pipe and a golden tobacco stalk, on the rear. The pedlar drove a smart little mare, and was a young man of excellent character, keen at a bargain, but none the worse liked by the Yankees; who, as I have heard them say, would rather be shaved with a sharp razor than a dull one. Especially was he beloved by the pretty girls along the Connecticut, whose favor he used to court by presents of the best smoking tobacco in his stock; knowing well that the country lasses of New England are generally great performers on pipes. Moreover, as will be seen in the course of my story, the pedlar was inquisitive, and something of a tattler, always itching to hear the news and anxious to tell it again.

After an early breakfast at Morristown, the tobacco pedlar, whose name was Dominicus Pike, had travelled seven miles through a solitary piece of woods, without speaking a word to anybody but himself and his little gray mare. It being nearly seven o'clock, he was as eager to hold a morning gossip as a city shop-keeper to read the morning paper. An opportunity seemed at hand when,

2. **Shaker**—a celibate communistic sect which established settlements in New England about 1790. Hawthorne in 1831 visited the community at Canterbury, New Hampshire, and the future Brook Farmer was much fascinated by their mode of life. See also his "The Shaker Bridal." 16. **Dominicus Pike**—In his first diary Hawthorne mentions a peddler, Dominicus Jordan, telling a ghost story. That nomad may have been the original of the loquacious character in this story.

after lighting a cigar with a sun-glass, he looked up, and perceived a man coming over the brow of the hill, at the foot of which the pedlar had stopped his green cart. Dominicus watched him as he descended, and noticed that he carried a bundle over his shoulder on the end of a stick, and travelled with a  
 5 weary, yet determined pace. He did not look as if he had started in the freshness of the morning, but had footed it all night, and meant to do the same all day.

"Good morning, mister," said Dominicus, when within speaking distance. "You go a pretty good jog. What's the latest news at Parker's Falls?"

10 The man pulled the broad brim of a gray hat over his eyes, and answered, rather suddenly, that he did not come from Parker's Falls, which, as being the limit of his own day's journey, the pedlar had naturally mentioned in his inquiry.

"Well then," rejoined Dominicus Pike, "let's have the latest news where you  
 15 did come from. I'm not particular about Parker's Falls. Any place will answer."

Being thus importuned, the traveller—who was as ill looking a fellow as one would desire to meet in a solitary piece of woods—appeared to hesitate a little, as if he was either searching his memory for news, or weighing the expediency of telling it. At last, mounting on the step of the cart, he whispered in the ear  
 20 of Dominicus, though he might have shouted aloud and no other mortal would have heard him.

"I do remember one little trifle of news," said he. "Old Mr. Higginbotham, of Kimballton, was murdered in his orchard, at eight o'clock last night, by an Irishman and a nigger. They strung him up to the branch of a St. Michael's  
 25 pear-tree, where nobody would find him till the morning."

As soon as this horrible intelligence was communicated, the stranger betook himself to his journey again, with more speed than ever, not even turning his head when Dominicus invited him to smoke a Spanish cigar and relate all the particulars. The pedlar whistled to his mare and went up the hill, pondering  
 30 on the doleful fate of Mr. Higginbotham whom he had known in the way of trade, having sold him many a bunch of long nines, and a great deal of pigtail, lady's twist, and fig tobacco. He was rather astonished at the rapidity with which the news had spread. Kimballton was nearly sixty miles distant in a straight line; the murder had been perpetrated only at eight o'clock the preceding  
 35 night; yet Dominicus had heard of it at seven in the morning, when, in all probability, poor Mr. Higginbotham's own family had but just discovered his corpse, hanging on the St. Michael's pear-tree. The stranger on foot must have worn seven-league boots to travel at such a rate.

"Ill news flies fast, they say," thought Dominicus Pike; "but this beats rail-  
 40 roads. The fellow ought to be hired to go express with the President's Message."

The difficulty was solved by supposing that the narrator had made a mistake of one day in the date of the occurrence; so that our friend did not hesitate to introduce the story at every tavern and country store along the road, expending a whole bunch of Spanish wrappers among at least twenty horrified audiences.

11. suddenly—"sullenly" in the second edition. 24. St. Michael's—pear-tree imported from the island by that name in the Azores. 31. long nines—a kind of cigar. The other terms refer to plug tobacco.

He found himself invariably the first bearer of the intelligence, and was so pestered with questions that he could not avoid filling up the outline, till it became quite a respectable narrative. He met with one piece of corroborative evidence. Mr. Higginbotham was a trader; and a former clerk of his, to whom Dominicus related the facts, testified that the old gentleman was accustomed to return home through the orchard about nightfall, with the money and valuable papers of the store in his pocket. The clerk manifested but little grief at Mr. Higginbotham's catastrophe, hinting, what the pedlar had discovered in his own dealings with him, that he was a crusty old fellow, as close as a vice. His property would descend to a pretty niece who was now keeping school in Kimballton. 5 10

What with telling the news for the public good, and driving bargains for his own, Dominicus was so much delayed on the road that he chose to put up at a tavern, about five miles short of Parker's Falls. After supper, lighting one of his prime cigars, he seated himself in the bar-room, and went through the story of the murder, which had grown so fast that it took him half an hour to tell. There were as many as twenty people in the room, nineteen of whom received it all for gospel. But the twentieth was an elderly farmer, who had arrived on horseback a short time before, and was now seated in a corner smoking his pipe. When the story was concluded, he rose up very deliberately, brought his chair right in front of Dominicus, and stared him full in the face, puffing out the vilest tobacco smoke the pedlar had ever smelt. 15 20

"Will you make affidavit," demanded he, in the tone of a country justice taking an examination, "that old Squire Higginbotham of Kimballton was murdered in his orchard the night before last, and found hanging on his great pear-tree yesterday morning?" 25

"I tell the story as I heard it, mister," answered Dominicus, dropping his half-burnt cigar; "I don't say that I saw the thing done. So I can't take my oath that he was murdered exactly in that way."

"But I can take mine," said the farmer, "that if Squire Higginbotham was murdered night before last, I drank a glass of bitters with his ghost this morning. Being a neighbor of mine, he called me into his store, as I was riding by, and treated me, and then asked me to do a little business for him on the road. He didn't seem to know any more about his own murder than I did." 30

"Why, then, it can't be a fact!" exclaimed Dominicus Pike. 35

"I guess he'd have mentioned, if it was," said the old farmer; and he removed his chair back to the corner, leaving Dominicus quite down in the mouth.

Here was a sad resurrection of old Mr. Higginbotham! The pedlar had no heart to mingle in the conversation any more, but comforted himself with a glass of gin and water, and went to bed where, all night long, he dreamed of hanging on the St. Michael's pear-tree. To avoid the old farmer (whom he so detested that his suspension would have pleased him better than Mr. Higginbotham's), Dominicus rose in the gray of the morning, put the little mare into the green cart, and trotted swiftly away towards Parker's Falls. The fresh breeze, the dewy road, and the pleasant summer dawn, revived his spirits, and might have encouraged him to repeat the old story had there been anybody 40 45

awake to hear it. But he met neither ox team, light wagon chaise, horseman, nor foot traveller, till, just as he crossed Salmon River, a man came trudging down to the bridge with a bundle over his shoulder, on the end of a stick.

- “Good morning, mister,” said the pedlar, reining in his mare. “If you come  
5 from Kimballton or that neighborhood, may be you can tell me the real fact about this affair of old Mr. Higginbotham. Was the old fellow actually murdered two or three nights ago, by an Irishman and a nigger?”

- Dominicus had spoken in too great a hurry to observe, at first, that the stranger himself had a deep tinge of negro blood. On hearing this sudden ques-  
10 tion, the Ethiopian appeared to change his skin, its yellow hue becoming a ghastly white, while, shaking and stammering, he thus replied:—

“No! no! There was no colored man! It was an Irishman that hanged him last night, at eight o’clock. I came away at seven! His folks can’t have looked for him in the orchard yet.”

- Scarcely had the yellow man spoken, when he interrupted himself, and though he seemed weary enough before, continued his journey at a pace which would have kept the pedlar’s mare on a smart trot. Dominicus stared after him in great perplexity. If the murder had not been committed till Tuesday night, who was the prophet that had foretold it, in all its circumstances, on  
20 Tuesday morning? If Mr. Higginbotham’s corpse were not yet discovered by his own family, how came the mulatto, at above thirty miles’ distance, to know that he was hanging in the orchard, especially as he had left Kimballton before the unfortunate man was hanged at all? These ambiguous circumstances, with the stranger’s surprise and terror, made Dominicus think of raising a hue and cry after him, as an accomplice in the murder; since a murder, it seemed, had  
25 really been perpetrated.

- “But let the poor devil go,” thought the pedlar. “I don’t want his black blood on my head; and hanging the nigger wouldn’t unhang Mr. Higginbotham. Unhang the old gentleman! It’s a sin, I know; but I should hate to have him  
30 come to life a second time, and give me the lie!”

- With these meditations, Dominicus Pike drove into the street of Parker’s Falls, which, as everybody knows, is as thriving a village as three cotton factories and a slitting mill can make it. The machinery was not in motion, and but a few of the shop doors unbarred, when he alighted in the stable yard of  
35 the tavern, and made it his first business to order the mare four quarts of oats. His second duty, of course, was to impart Mr. Higginbotham’s catastrophe to the hostler. He deemed it advisable, however, not to be too positive as to the date of the direful fact, and also to be uncertain whether it were perpetrated by an Irishman and a mulatto, or by the son of Erin alone. Neither did he  
40 profess to relate it on his own authority, or that of any one person; but mentioned it as a report generally diffused.

- The story ran through the town like fire among girdled trees, and became so much the universal talk that nobody could tell whence it had originated. Mr. Higginbotham was as well known at Parker’s Falls as any citizen of the  
45 place, being part owner of the slitting mill, and a considerable stockholder in

33. **slitting mill**—a mill or machine by which iron bars (or plates) are slit into rods from which nails can be made.

the cotton factories. The inhabitants felt their own prosperity interested in his fate. Such was the excitement, that the Parker's Falls Gazette anticipated its regular day of publication, and came out with half a form of blank paper and a column of double pica emphasized with capitals, and headed HORRID MURDER OF MR. HIGGINBOTHAM! Among other dreadful details, the printed account described the mark of the cord round the dead man's neck, and stated the number of thousand dollars of which he had been robbed; there was much pathos also about the affliction of his niece, who had gone from one fainting fit to another, ever since her uncle was found hanging on the St. Michael's pear-tree with his pockets inside out. The village poet likewise commemorated the young girl's grief in seventeen stanzas of a ballad. The selectmen held a meeting, and, in consideration of Mr. Higginbotham's claims on the town, determined to issue handbills, offering a reward of five hundred dollars for the apprehension of his murderers, and the recovery of the stolen property.

Meanwhile the whole population of Parker's Falls, consisting of shopkeepers, mistresses of boarding-houses, factory girls, millmen, and school boys, rushed into the street and kept up such a terrible loquacity as more than compensated for the silence of the cotton machines, which refrained from their usual din out of respect to the deceased. Had Mr. Higginbotham cared about posthumous renown, his untimely ghost would have exulted in this tumult. Our friend Dominicus, in his vanity of heart, forgot his intended precautions, and mounting on the town pump, announced himself as the bearer of the authentic intelligence which had caused so wonderful a sensation. He immediately became the great man of the moment, and had just begun a new edition of the narrative, with a voice like a field preacher, when the mail stage drove into the village street. It had travelled all night, and must have shifted horses at Kimballton, at three in the morning.

"Now we shall hear all the particulars," shouted the crowd.

The coach rumbled up to the piazza of the tavern, followed by a thousand people; for if any man had been minding his own business till then, he now left it at sixes and sevens, to hear the news. The pedlar, foremost in the race, discovered two passengers, both of whom had been startled from a comfortable nap to find themselves in the centre of a mob. Every man assailing them with separate questions, all propounded at once, the couple were struck speechless, though one was a lawyer and the other a young lady.

"Mr. Higginbotham! Mr. Higginbotham! Tell us the particulars about old Mr. Higginbotham!" bawled the mob. "What is the coroner's verdict? Are the murderers apprehended? Is Mr. Higginbotham's niece come out of her fainting fits? Mr. Higginbotham! Mr. Higginbotham!"

The coachman said not a word, except to swear awfully at the hostler for not bringing him a fresh team of horses. The lawyer inside had generally his wits about him even when asleep; the first thing he did, after learning the cause of the excitement, was to produce a large, red pocket-book. Meantime Dominicus Pike, being an extremely polite young man, and also suspecting that a female tongue would tell the story as glibly as a lawyer's, had handed the lady out of the coach. She was a fine, smart girl, now wide awake and bright as a button,

and had such a sweet pretty mouth, that Dominicus would almost as lief have heard a love tale from it as a tale of murder.

"Gentlemen and ladies," said the lawyer to the shopkeepers, the millmen, and the factory girls, "I can assure you that some unaccountable mistake, or, 5 more probably, a wilful falsehood, maliciously contrived to injure Mr. Higginbotham's credit, has excited this singular uproar. We passed through Kimballton at three o'clock this morning, and most certainly should have been informed of the murder had any been perpetrated. But I have proof nearly as strong as Mr. Higginbotham's own oral testimony, in the negative. Here is a 10 note relating to a suit of his in the Connecticut courts, which was delivered me from that gentleman himself. I find it dated at ten o'clock last evening."

So saying, the lawyer exhibited the date and signature of the note, which irrefragably proved, either that this perverse Mr. Higginbotham was alive when he wrote it, or—as some deemed the more probable case, of two doubtful ones— 15 that he was so absorbed in worldly business as to continue to transact it even after his death. But unexpected evidence was forthcoming. The young lady, after listening to the pedlar's explanation, merely seized a moment to smooth her gown and put her curls in order, and then appeared at the tavern door, making a modest signal to be heard.

20 "Good people," said she, "I am Mr. Higginbotham's niece."

A wondering murmur passed through the crowd on beholding her so rosy and bright; that same unhappy niece, whom they had supposed, on the authority of the Parker's Falls Gazette, to be lying at death's door in a fainting fit. But some shrewd fellows had doubted, all along, whether a young lady 25 would be quite so desperate at the hanging of a rich old uncle.

"You see," continued Miss Higginbotham, with a smile, "that this strange story is quite unfounded as to myself; and I believe I may affirm it to be equally so in regard to my dear uncle Higginbotham. He has the kindness to give me a home in his house, though I contribute to my own support by teaching a 30 school. I left Kimballton this morning to spend the vacation of commencement week with a friend, about five miles from Parker's Falls. My generous uncle, when he heard me on the stairs, called me to his bedside, and gave me two dollars and fifty cents to pay my stage fare, and another dollar for my extra expenses. He then laid his pocket-book under his pillow, shook hands 35 with me, and advised me to take some biscuit in my bag, instead of breakfasting on the road. I feel confident, therefore, that I left my beloved relative alive, and trust that I shall find him so on my return."

The young lady courtesied at the close of her speech, which was so sensible and well worded, and delivered with such grace and propriety, that everybody 40 thought her fit to be preceptress of the best academy in the State. But a stranger would have supposed that Mr. Higginbotham was an object of abhorrence at Parker's Falls, and that a thanksgiving had been proclaimed for his murder; so excessive was the wrath of the inhabitants on learning their mistake. The millmen resolved to bestow public honors on Dominicus Pike, only hesitating 45 whether to tar and feather him, ride him on a rail, or refresh him with an ablution at the town pump, on the top of which he had declared himself the bearer of the news. The selectmen, by advice of the lawyer, spoke of pros-

ecuting him for a misdemeanor, in circulating unfounded reports, to the great disturbance of the peace of the Commonwealth. Nothing saved Dominicus, either from mob law or a court of justice, but an eloquent appeal made by the young lady in his behalf. Addressing a few words of heartfelt gratitude to his benefactress, he mounted the green cart and rode out of town, under a discharge of artillery from the school boys, who found plenty of ammunition in the neighboring clay-pits and mud holes. As he turned his head to exchange a farewell glance with Mr. Higginbotham's niece, a ball, of the consistence of hasty pudding, hit him slap in the mouth, giving him a most grim aspect. His whole person was so bespattered with the like filthy missiles, that he had almost a mind to ride back, and supplicate for the threatened ablution at the town pump; for, though not meant in kindness, it would now have been a deed of charity.

However, the sun shone bright on poor Dominicus, and the mud, an emblem of all stains of undeserved opprobrium, was easily brushed off when dry. Being a funny rogue, his heart soon cheered up; nor could he refrain from a hearty laugh at the uproar which his story had excited. The handbills of the selectmen would cause the commitment of all the vagabonds in the State; the paragraph in the Parker's Falls Gazette would be reprinted from Maine to Florida, and perhaps form an item in the London newspapers; and many a miser would tremble for his money bags and life, on learning the catastrophe of Mr. Higginbotham. The pedlar meditated with much fervor on the charms of the young schoolmistress, and swore that Daniel Webster never spoke nor looked so like an angel as Miss Higginbotham, while defending him from the wrathful populace at Parker's Falls.

Dominicus was now on the Kimballton turnpike, having all along determined to visit that place, though business had drawn him out of the most direct road from Morristown. As he approached the scene of the supposed murder, he continued to revolve the circumstances in his mind, and was astonished at the aspect which the whole case assumed. Had nothing occurred to corroborate the story of the first traveller, it might now have been considered as a hoax; but the yellow man was evidently acquainted either with the report or the fact; and there was a mystery in his dismayed and guilty look on being abruptly questioned. When, to this singular combination of incidents, it was added that the rumor tallied exactly with Mr. Higginbotham's character and habits of life; and that he had an orchard, and a St. Michael's pear-tree, near which he always passed at nightfall: the circumstantial evidence appeared so strong that Dominicus doubted whether the autograph produced by the lawyer, or even the niece's direct testimony, ought to be equivalent. Making cautious inquiries along the road, the pedlar further learned that Mr. Higginbotham had in his service an Irishman of doubtful character, whom he had hired without a recommendation, on the score of economy.

"May I be hanged myself," exclaimed Dominicus Pike aloud, on reaching the top of a lonely hill, "if I'll believe old Higginbotham is unhanged till I see him with my own eyes, and hear it from his own mouth! And as he's a real

9. **hasty pudding**—in New England made of Indian meal and water. 23. **Daniel Webster**—(1782-1852) mentioned here because of his fame as a trial lawyer in criminal cases.



shaver, I'll have the minister or some other responsible man for an indorser."

It was growing dusk when he reached the toll-house on Kimballton turnpike, about a quarter of a mile from the village of this name. His little mare was fast bringing him up with a man on horseback, who trotted through the gate a few rods in advance of him, nodded to the toll-gatherer, and kept on towards the village. Dominicus was acquainted with the tollman, and, while making change, the usual remarks on the weather passed between them.

"I suppose," said the pedlar, throwing back his whiplash, to bring it down like a feather on the mare's flank, "you have not seen anything of old Mr. Higginbotham within a day or two?"

"Yes," answered the toll-gatherer. "He passed the gate just before you drove up, and yonder he rides now, if you can see him through the dusk. He's been to Woodfield this afternoon, attending a sheriff's sale there. The old man generally shakes hands and has a little chat with me; but to-night, he nodded,—as if to say, 'Charge my toll,' and jogged on; for wherever he goes, he must always be at home by eight o'clock."

"So they tell me," said Dominicus.

"I never saw a man look so yellow and thin as the squire does," continued the toll-gatherer. "Says I to myself, to-night, he's more like a ghost or an old mummy than good flesh and blood."

The pedlar strained his eyes through the twilight, and could just discern the horseman now far ahead on the village road. He seemed to recognize the rear of Mr. Higginbotham; but through the evening shadows, and amid the dust from the horse's feet, the figure appeared dim and unsubstantial; as if the shape of the mysterious old man were faintly moulded of darkness and gray light. Dominicus shivered.

"Mr. Higginbotham has come back from the other world, by way of the Kimballton turnpike," thought he.

He shook the reins and rode forward, keeping about the same distance in the rear of the gray old shadow, till the latter was concealed by a bend of the road. On reaching this point, the pedlar no longer saw the man on horseback, but found himself at the head of the village street, not far from a number of stores and two taverns, clustered round the meeting-house steeple. On his left were a stone wall and a gate, the boundary of a wood-lot, beyond which lay an orchard, farther still, a mowing field, and last of all, a house. These were the premises of Mr. Higginbotham, whose dwelling stood beside the old highway, but had been left in the background by the Kimballton turnpike. Dominicus knew the place; and the little mare stopped short by instinct; for he was not conscious of tightening the reins.

"For the soul of me, I cannot get by this gate!" said he, trembling. "I never shall be my own man again, till I see whether Mr. Higginbotham is hanging on the St. Michael's pear-tree!"

He leaped from the cart, gave the rein a turn round the gate post, and ran along the green path of the wood-lot as if Old Nick were chasing behind. Just then the village clock tolled eight, and as each deep stroke fell, Dominicus gave a fresh bound and flew faster than before, till, dim in the solitary centre of the orchard, he saw the fated pear-tree. One great branch stretched from the old

contorted trunk across the path, and threw the darkest shadow on that one spot. But something seemed to struggle beneath the branch!

The pedlar had never pretended to more courage than befits a man of peaceable occupation, nor could he account for his valor on this awful emergency. Certain it is, however, that he rushed forward, prostrated a sturdy Irishman with the butt end of his whip, and found—not indeed hanging on the St. Michael's pear-tree, but trembling beneath it, with a halter round his neck—the old, identical Mr. Higginbotham! 5

"Mr. Higginbotham," said Dominicus tremulously, "you're an honest man, and I'll take your word for it. Have you been hanged or not?" 10

If the riddle be not already guessed, a few words will explain the simple machinery by which this "coming event" was made to "cast its shadow before." Three men had plotted the robbery and murder of Mr. Higginbotham; two of them, successively, lost courage and fled, each delaying the crime one night by their disappearance; the third was in the act of perpetration, when a champion, blindly obeying the call of fate, like the heroes of old romance, appeared in the person of Dominicus Pike. 15

It only remains to say, that Mr. Higginbotham took the pedlar into high favor, sanctioned his addresses to the pretty schoolmistress, and settled his whole property on their children, allowing themselves the interest. In due time, the old gentleman capped the climax of his favors, by dying a Christian death, in bed, since which melancholy event Dominicus Pike has removed from Kimballton, and established a large tobacco manufactory in my native village. 20

## YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN

Published in the *New England Magazine*, April, 1835; included in *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846). Fanny Cherry in *American Literature*, Vol. V, pp. 342-48, regards as a source of this story "The Conversation of the Dogs" by Cervantes. The term "Goodman" referred to a commoner when "Mr." was restricted to men of position.

YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN came forth at sunset into the street at Salem village; but put his head back, after crossing the threshold, to exchange a parting kiss with his young wife. And Faith, as the wife was aptly named, thrust her own pretty head into the street, letting the wind play with the pink ribbons of her cap while she called to Goodman Brown. 25

"Dearest heart," whispered she, softly and rather sadly, when her lips were close to his ear, "prithee put off your journey until sunrise and sleep in your own bed to-night. A lone woman is troubled with such dreams and such thoughts that she's afraid of herself sometimes. Pray tarry with me this night, dear husband, of all nights in the year." 30

"My love and my Faith," replied young Goodman Brown, "of all nights in the year, this one night must I tarry away from thee. My journey, as thou callest it, forth and back again, must needs be done 'twixt now and sunrise. 35

12. "shadow before"—from "Lochiel's Warning," line 56, by Thomas Campbell (1777-1844).

What, my sweet, pretty wife, dost thou doubt me already, and we but three months married?"

"Then God bless you!" said Faith, with the pink ribbons; "and may you find all well when you come back."

5 "Amen!" cried Goodman Brown. "Say thy prayers, dear Faith, and go to bed at dusk, and no harm will come to thee."

So they parted; and the young man pursued his way until, being about to turn the corner by the meeting-house, he looked back and saw the head of Faith still peeping after him with a melancholy air, in spite of her pink ribbons.

10 "Poor little Faith!" thought he, for his heart smote him. "What a wretch am I to leave her on such an errand! She talks of dreams, too. Methought as she spoke there was trouble in her face, as if a dream had warned her what work is to be done to-night. But no, no; 'twould kill her to think it. Well, she's a blessed angel on earth; and after this one night I'll cling to her skirts and follow  
15 her to heaven."

With this excellent resolve for the future, Goodman Brown felt himself justified in making more haste on his present evil purpose. He had taken a dreary road, darkened by all the gloomiest trees of the forest, which barely stood aside to let the narrow path creep through, and closed immediately behind. It was  
20 all as lonely as could be; and there is this peculiarity in such a solitude, that the traveller knows not who may be concealed by the innumerable trunks and the thick boughs overhead; so that with lonely footsteps he may yet be passing through an unseen multitude.

"There may be a devilish Indian behind every tree," said Goodman Brown to himself; and he glanced fearfully behind him as he added, "What if the devil himself should be at my very elbow!"

His head being turned back, he passed a crook of the road, and, looking forward again, beheld the figure of a man, in grave and decent attire, seated at the foot of an old tree. He arose at Goodman Brown's approach and walked  
30 onward side by side with him.

"You are late, Goodman Brown," said he. "The clock of the Old South was striking as I came through Boston, and that is full fifteen minutes ago."

"Faith kept me back a while," replied the young man, with a tremor in his voice, caused by the sudden appearance of his companion, though not wholly  
35 unexpected.

It was now deep dusk in the forest, and deepest in that part of it where these two were journeying. As nearly as could be discerned, the second traveller was about fifty years old, apparently in the same rank of life as Goodman Brown, and bearing a considerable resemblance to him, though perhaps more in ex-  
40 pression than features. Still they might have been taken for father and son. And yet, though the elder person was as simply clad as the younger, and as simple in manner too, he had an indescribable air of one who knew the world, and who would not have felt abashed at the governor's dinner table or in King William's court, were it possible that his affairs should call him thither. But

31. *Old South*—church in Boston built in 1730 and used as a meeting-place by the Revolutionary party preceding the war. 43-44. *King William's*—William III (1650-1702), King of England, 1689-1702.

the only thing about him that could be fixed upon as remarkable was his staff, which bore the likeness of a great black snake, so curiously wrought that it might almost be seen to twist and wriggle itself like a living serpent. This, of course, must have been an ocular deception, assisted by the uncertain light.

"Come, Goodman Brown," cried his fellow-traveller, "this is a dull pace for the beginning of a journey. Take my staff, if you are so soon weary." 5

"Friend," said the other, exchanging his slow pace for a full stop, "having kept covenant by meeting thee here, it is my purpose now to return whence I came. I have scruples touching the matter thou wot'st of."

"Sayest thou so?" replied he of the serpent, smiling apart. "Let us walk on, nevertheless, reasoning as we go; and if I convince thee not thou shalt turn back. We are but a little way in the forest yet." 10

"Too far! too far!" exclaimed the goodman, unconsciously resuming his walk. "My father never went into the woods on such an errand, nor his father before him. We have been a race of honest men and good Christians since the days of the martyrs; and shall I be the first of the name of Brown that ever took this path and kept"— 15

"Such company, thou wouldst say," observed the elder person, interpreting his pause. "Well said, Goodman Brown! I have been as well acquainted with your family as with ever a one among the Puritans; and that's no trifle to say. I helped your grandfather, the constable, when he lashed the Quaker woman so smartly through the streets of Salem; and it was I that brought your father a pitch-pine knot, kindled at my own hearth, to set fire to an Indian village, in King Philip's war. They were my good friends, both; and many a pleasant walk have we had along this path, and returned merrily after midnight. I would fain be friends with you for their sake." 20 25

"If it be as thou sayest," replied Goodman Brown, "I marvel they never spoke of these matters; or, verily, I marvel not, seeing that the least rumor of the sort would have driven them from New England. We are a people of prayer, and good works to boot, and abide no such wickedness." 30

"Wickedness or not," said the traveller with the twisted staff, "I have a very general acquaintance here in New England. The deacons of many a church have drunk the communion wine with me; the selectmen of divers towns make me their chairman; and a majority of the Great and General Court are firm supporters of my interest. The governor and I, too— But these are state secrets." 35

"Can this be so?" cried Goodman Brown, with a stare of amazement at his undisturbed companion. "Howbeit, I have nothing to do with the governor and council; they have their own ways, and are no rule for a simple husbandman like me. But, were I to go on with thee, how should I meet the eye of that good old man, our minister, at Salem village? Oh, his voice would make me tremble both Sabbath day and lecture day." 40

Thus far the elder traveller had listened with due gravity; but now burst into a fit of irrepressible mirth, shaking himself so violently that his snake-like staff actually seemed to wriggle in sympathy.

"Ha! ha! ha!" shouted he again and again; then composing himself, "Well, 45

24. **King Philip's war**—the last stand by red men in New England, 1676. 34. **Great and General Court**—the Colonial legislature of Massachusetts. 41. **lecture day**—Thursday.

go on, Goodman Brown, go on; but, prithee, don't kill me with laughing."

"Well, then, to end the matter at once," said Goodman Brown, considerably nettled, "there is my wife, Faith. It would break her dear little heart; and I'd rather break my own."

- 5 "Nay, if that be the case," answered the other, "e'en go thy ways, Goodman Brown. I would not for twenty old women like the one hobbling before us that Faith should come to any harm."

As he spoke he pointed his staff at a female figure on the path, in whom Goodman Brown recognized a very pious and exemplary dame, who had  
10 taught him his catechism in youth, and was still his moral and spiritual adviser, jointly with the minister and Deacon Gookin.

"A marvel, truly, that Goody Cloyse should be so far in the wilderness at nightfall," said he. "But with your leave, friend, I shall take a cut through the woods until we have left this Christian woman behind. Being a stranger to you,  
15 she might ask whom I was consorting with and whither I was going."

"Be it so," said his fellow-traveller. "Betake you to the woods, and let me keep the path."

Accordingly the young man turned aside, but took care to watch his companion, who advanced softly along the road until he had come within a staff's  
20 length of the old dame. She, meanwhile, was making the best of her way, with singular speed for so aged a woman, and mumbling some indistinct words—a prayer, doubtless—as she went. The traveller put forth his staff and touched her withered neck with what seemed the serpent's tail.

"The devil!" screamed the pious old lady.

- 25 "Then Goody Cloyse knows her old friend?" observed the traveller, confronting her and leaning on his writhing stick.

"Ah, forsooth, and is it your worship indeed?" cried the good dame. "Yea, truly is it, and in the very image of my old gossip, Goodman Brown, the grandfather of the silly fellow that now is. But—would your worship believe  
30 it?—my broomstick hath strangely disappeared, stolen, as I suspect, by that unhangd witch, Goody Cory, and that, too, when I was all anointed with the juice of smallage, and cinquefoil, and wolf's bane—"

"Mingled with fine wheat and the fat of a new-born babe," said the shape of old Goodman Brown.

- 35 "Ah, your worship knows the recipe," cried the old lady, cackling aloud. "So, as I was saying, being all ready for the meeting, and no horse to ride on, I made up my mind to foot it; for they tell me there is a nice young man to be taken into communion to-night. But now your good worship will lend me your arm, and we shall be there in a twinkling."

- 40 "That can hardly be," answered her friend. "I may not spare you my arm, Goody Cloyse; but here is my staff, if you will."

So saying, he threw it down at her feet, where, perhaps, it assumed life, being one of the rods which its owner had formerly lent to the Egyptian magi. Of this fact, however, Goodman Brown could not take cognizance. He

25. **Goody Cloyse**—an historical character sentenced to death for witchcraft by Hawthorne's great-great-grandfather in 1692, as were Goody Cory (line 31) and Martha Carrier (p. 502, line 45). 32. **smallage**—parsley.

had cast up his eyes in astonishment, and, looking down again, beheld neither Goody Cloyse nor the serpentine staff, but his fellow-traveller alone, who waited for him as calmly as if nothing had happened.

"That old woman taught me my catechism," said the young man; and there was a world of meaning in this simple comment.

They continued to walk onward, while the elder traveller exhorted his companion to make good speed and persevere in the path, discoursing so aptly that his arguments seemed rather to spring up in the bosom of his auditor than to be suggested by himself. As they went, he plucked a branch of maple to serve for a walking stick, and began to strip it of the twigs and little boughs, which were wet with evening dew. The moment his fingers touched them they became strangely withered and dried up as with a week's sunshine. Thus the pair proceeded, at a good free pace, until suddenly, in a gloomy hollow of the road, Goodman Brown sat himself down on the stump of a tree and refused to go any farther.

"Friend," said he, stubbornly, "my mind is made up. Not another step will I budge on this errand. What if a wretched old woman do choose to go to the devil when I thought she was going to heaven: is that any reason why I should quit my dear Faith and go after her?"

"You will think better of this by and by," said his acquaintance, composedly. "Sit here and rest yourself a while; and when you feel like moving again, there is my staff to help you along."

Without more words, he threw his companion the maple stick, and was as speedily out of sight as if he had vanished into the deepening gloom. The young man sat a few moments by the roadside, applauding himself greatly, and thinking with how clear a conscience he should meet the minister in his morning walk, nor shrink from the eye of good old Deacon Gookin. And what calm sleep would be his that very night, which was to have been spent so wickedly, but so purely and sweetly now, in the arms of Faith! Amidst these pleasant and praiseworthy meditations, Goodman Brown heard the tramp of horses along the road, and deemed it advisable to conceal himself within the verge of the forest, conscious of the guilty purpose that had brought him thither, though now so happily turned from it.

On came the hoof tramps and the voices of the riders, two grave old voices, conversing soberly as they drew near. These mingled sounds appeared to pass along the road, within a few yards of the young man's hiding-place; but, owing doubtless to the depth of the gloom at that particular spot, neither the travellers nor their steeds were visible. Though their figures brushed the small boughs by the wayside, it could not be seen that they intercepted, even for a moment, the faint gleam from the strip of bright sky athwart which they must have passed. Goodman Brown alternately crouched and stood on tiptoe, pulling aside the branches and thrusting forth his head as far as he durst without discerning so much as a shadow. It vexed him the more, because he could have sworn, were such a thing possible, that he recognized the voices of the minister and Deacon Gookin, jogging along quietly, as they were wont to do, when bound to some ordination or ecclesiastical council. While yet within hearing, one of the riders stopped to pluck a switch.

"Of the two, reverend sir," said the voice like the deacon's, "I had rather miss an ordination dinner than to-night's meeting. They tell me that some of our community are to be here from Falmouth and beyond, and others from Connecticut and Rhode Island, besides several of the Indian powwows, who, after their fashion, know almost as much deviltry as the best of us. Moreover, there is a goodly young woman to be taken into communion."

"Mighty well, Deacon Gookin!" replied the solemn old tones of the minister. "Spur up, or we shall be late. Nothing can be done, you know, until I get on the ground."

The hoofs clattered again; and the voices, talking so strangely in the empty air, passed on through the forest, where no church had ever been gathered or solitary Christian prayed. Whither, then, could these holy men be journeying so deep into the heathen wilderness? Young Goodman Brown caught hold of a tree for support, being ready to sink down on the ground, faint and overburdened with the heavy sickness of his heart. He looked up to the sky, doubting whether there really was a heaven above him. Yet there was the blue arch, and the stars brightening in it.

"With heaven above and Faith below, I will yet stand firm against the devil!" cried Goodman Brown.

While he still gazed upward into the deep arch of the firmament and had lifted his hands to pray, a cloud, though no wind was stirring, hurried across the zenith and hid the brightening stars. The blue sky was still visible, except directly overhead, where this black mass of cloud was sweeping swiftly northward. Aloft in the air, as if from the depths of the cloud, came a confused and doubtful sound of voices. Once the listener fancied that he could distinguish the accents of townspeople of his own, men and women, both pious and ungodly, many of whom he had met at the communion table, and had seen others rioting at the tavern. The next moment, so indistinct were the sounds, he doubted whether he had heard aught but the murmur of the old forest, whispering without a wind. Then came a stronger swell of those familiar tones, heard daily in the sunshine at Salem village, but never until now from a cloud of night. There was one voice, of a young woman, uttering lamentations, yet with an uncertain sorrow, and entreating for some favor, which, perhaps, it would grieve her to obtain; and all the unseen multitude, both saints and sinners, seemed to encourage her onward.

"Faith!" shouted Goodman Brown, in a voice of agony and desperation; and the echoes of the forest mocked him, crying, "Faith! Faith!" as if bewildered wretches were seeking her all through the wilderness.

The cry of grief, rage, and terror was yet piercing the night, when the unhappy husband held his breath for a response. There was a scream, drowned immediately in a louder murmur of voices, fading into far-off laughter, as the dark cloud swept away, leaving the clear and silent sky above Goodman Brown. But something fluttered lightly down through the air and caught on the branch of a tree. The young man seized it, and beheld a pink ribbon.

"My Faith is gone!" cried he, after one stupefied moment. "There is no good on earth; and sin is but a name. Come, devil; for to thee is this world given."

And, maddened with despair, so that he laughed loud and long, did Goodman Brown grasp his staff and set forth again, at such a rate that he seemed to fly along the forest path rather than to walk or run. The road grew wilder and drearier and more faintly traced, and vanished at length, leaving him in the heart of the dark wilderness, still rushing onward with the instinct that guides mortal man to evil. The whole forest was peopled with frightful sounds—the creaking of the trees, the howling of wild beasts, and the yell of Indians; while sometimes the wind tolled like a distant church bell, and sometimes gave a broad roar around the traveller, as if all Nature were laughing him to scorn. But he was himself the chief horror of the scene, and shrank not from its other horrors. 5 10

“Ha! ha! ha!” roared Goodman Brown when the wind laughed at him. “Let us hear which will laugh loudest. Think not to frighten me with your deviltry. Come witch, come wizard, come Indian powwow, come devil himself, and here comes Goodman Brown. You may as well fear him as he fear you.” 15

In truth, all through the haunted forest there could be nothing more frightful than the figure of Goodman Brown. On he flew among the black pines, brandishing his staff with frenzied gestures, now giving vent to an inspiration of horrid blasphemy, and now shouting forth such laughter as set all the echoes of the forest laughing like demons around him. The fiend in his own shape is less hideous than when he rages in the breast of man. Thus sped the demoniac on his course, until, quivering among the trees, he saw a red light before him, as when the felled trunks and branches of a clearing have been set on fire, and throw up their lurid blaze against the sky, at the hour of midnight. He paused, in a lull of the tempest that had driven him onward, and heard the swell of what seemed a hymn, rolling solemnly from a distance with the weight of many voices. He knew the tune; it was a familiar one in the choir of the village meeting-house. The verse died heavily away, and was lengthened by a chorus, not of human voices, but of all the sounds of the benighted wilderness pealing in awful harmony together. Goodman Brown cried out, and his cry was lost to his own ear by its unison with the cry of the desert. 20 25 30

In the interval of silence he stole forward until the light glared full upon his eyes. At one extremity of an open space, hemmed in by the dark wall of the forest, arose a rock, bearing some rude, natural resemblance either to an altar or a pulpit, and surrounded by four blazing pines, their tops aflame, their stems untouched, like candles at an evening meeting. The mass of foliage that had overgrown the summit of the rock was all on fire, blazing high into the night and fitfully illuminating the whole field. Each pendent twig and leafy festoon was in a blaze. As the red light arose and fell, a numerous congregation alternately shone forth, then disappeared in shadow, and again grew, as it were, out of the darkness, peopling the heart of the solitary woods at once. 35 40

“A grave and dark-clad company,” quoth Goodman Brown.

In truth they were such. Among them, quivering to and fro between gloom and splendor, appeared faces that would be seen next day at the council board of the province, and others which, Sabbath after Sabbath, looked devoutly 45



heavenward, and benignantly over the crowded pews, from the holiest pulpits in the land. Some affirm that the lady of the governor was there. At least there were high dames well known to her, and wives of honored husbands, and widows, a great multitude, and ancient maidens, all of excellent repute, and  
5 fair young girls, who trembled lest their mothers should espy them. Either the sudden gleams of light flashing over the obscure field bedazzled Goodman Brown, or he recognized a score of the church members of Salem village famous for their especial sanctity. Good old Deacon Gookin had arrived, and waited at the skirts of that venerable saint, his revered pastor. But, irreverently  
10 consorting with these grave, reputable, and pious people, these elders of the church, these chaste dames and dewy virgins, there were men of dissolute lives and women of spotted fame, wretches given over to all mean and filthy vice, and suspected even of horrid crimes. It was strange to see that the good shrank not from the wicked, nor were the sinners abashed by the saints.  
15 Scattered also among their pale-faced enemies were the Indian priests, or pow-wows, who had often scared their native forest with more hideous incantations than any known to English witchcraft.

"But where is Faith?" thought Goodman Brown; and, as hope came into his heart, he trembled.

20 Another verse of the hymn arose, a slow and mournful strain, such as the pious love, but joined to words which expressed all that our nature can conceive of sin, and darkly hinted at far more. Unfathomable to mere mortals is the lore of fiends. Verse after verse was sung; and still the chorus of the desert swelled between like the deepest tone of a mighty organ; and with the final  
25 peal of that dreadful anthem there came a sound, as if the roaring wind, the rushing streams, the howling beasts, and every other voice of the unconcerted wilderness were mingling and according with the voice of guilty man in homage to the prince of all. The four blazing pines threw up a loftier flame, and obscurely discovered shapes and visages of horror on the smoke wreaths above  
30 the impious assembly. At the same moment the fire on the rock shot redly forth and formed a glowing arch above its base, where now appeared a figure. With reverence be it spoken, the figure bore no slight similitude, both in garb and manner, to some grave divine of the New England churches.

"Bring forth the converts!" cried a voice that echoed through the field and  
35 rolled into the forest.

At the word, Goodman Brown stepped forth from the shadow of the trees and approached the congregation, with whom he felt a loathful brotherhood by the sympathy of all that was wicked in his heart. He could have well-nigh sworn that the shape of his own dead father beckoned him to advance, looking  
40 downward from a smoke wreath, while a woman, with dim features of despair, threw out her hand to warn him back. Was it his mother? But he had no power to retreat one step, nor to resist, even in thought, when the minister and good old Deacon Gookin seized his arms and led him to the blazing rock. Thither came also the slender form of a veiled female, led between  
45 Goody Cloyse, that pious teacher of the catechism, and Martha Carrier, who had received the devil's promise to be queen of hell. A rampant hag was she. And there stood the proselytes beneath the canopy of fire.

"Welcome, my children," said the dark figure, "to the communion of your race. Ye have found thus young your nature and your destiny. My children, look behind you!"

They turned; and flashing forth, as it were, in a sheet of flame, the fiend worshippers were seen; the smile of welcome gleamed darkly on every visage. 5

"There," resumed the sable form, "are all whom ye have revered from youth. Ye deemed them holier than yourselves, and shrank from your own sin, contrasting it with their lives of righteousness and prayerful aspirations heavenward. Yet here are they all in my worshipping assembly. This night it shall be granted you to know their secret deeds: how hoary-bearded elders of the church have whispered wanton words to the young maids of their households; how many a woman, eager for widows' weeds, has given her husband a drink at bedtime and let him sleep his last sleep in her bosom; how beardless youths have made haste to inherit their fathers' wealth; and how fair damsels—blush not, sweet ones—have dug little graves in the garden, and bidden me, the sole guest, to an infant's funeral. By the sympathy of your human hearts for sin ye shall scent out all the places—whether in church, bed-chamber, street, field, or forest—where crime has been committed, and shall exult to behold the whole earth one stain of guilt, one mighty blood spot. Far more than this. It shall be yours to penetrate, in every bosom, the deep mystery of sin, the fountain of all wicked arts, and which inexhaustibly supplies more evil impulses than human power—than my power at its utmost—can make manifest in deeds. And now, my children, look upon each other." 10 15 20

They did so; and, by the blaze of the hell-kindled torches, the wretched man beheld his Faith, and the wife her husband, trembling before that unhallowed altar. 25

"Lo, there ye stand, my children," said the figure, in a deep and solemn tone, almost sad with its despairing awfulness, as if his once angelic nature could yet mourn for our miserable race. "Depending upon one another's hearts, ye had still hoped that virtue were not all a dream. Now are ye undeceived. Evil is the nature of mankind. Evil must be your only happiness. Welcome again, my children, to the communion of your race." 30

"Welcome," repeated the fiend worshippers, in one cry of despair and triumph.

And there they stood, the only pair, as it seemed, who were yet hesitating on the verge of wickedness in this dark world. A basin was hollowed, naturally, in the rock. Did it contain water, reddened by the lurid light? or was it blood? or, perchance, a liquid flame? Herein did the shape of evil dip his hand and prepare to lay the mark of baptism upon their foreheads, that they might be partakers of the mystery of sin, more conscious of the secret guilt of others, both in deed and thought, than they could now be of their own. The husband cast one look at his pale wife, and Faith at him. What polluted wretches would the next glance show them to each other, shuddering alike at what they disclosed and what they saw! 35 40

"Faith! Faith!" cried the husband, "look up to heaven, and resist the wicked one." 45

Whether Faith obeyed he knew not. Hardly had he spoken when he found

himself amid calm night and solitude, listening to a roar of the wind which died heavily away through the forest. He staggered against the rock, and felt it chill and damp; while a hanging twig, that had been all on fire, besprinkled his cheek with the coldest dew.

- 5 The next morning young Goodman Brown came slowly into the street of Salem village, staring around him like a bewildered man. The good old minister was taking a walk along the graveyard to get an appetite for breakfast and meditate his sermon, and bestowed a blessing, as he passed, on Goodman Brown. He shrank from the venerable saint as if to avoid an anathema. Old
- 10 Deacon Gookin was at domestic worship, and the holy words of his prayer were heard through the open window. "What God doth the wizard pray to?" quoth Goodman Brown. Goody Cloyse, that excellent old Christian, stood in the early sunshine at her own lattice, catechizing a little girl who had brought her a pint of morning's milk. Goodman Brown snatched away the child as from
- 15 the grasp of the fiend himself. Turning the corner by the meeting-house, he spied the head of Faith, with the pink ribbons, gazing anxiously forth, and bursting into such joy at sight of him that she skipped along the street and almost kissed her husband before the whole village. But Goodman Brown looked sternly and sadly into her face, and passed on without a greeting.
- 20 Had Goodman Brown fallen asleep in the forest and only dreamed a wild dream of a witch-meeting?

- Be it so if you will; but, alas! it was a dream of evil omen for young Goodman Brown. A stern, a sad, a darkly meditative, a distrustful, if not a desperate man did he become from the night of that fearful dream. On the Sabbath day,
- 25 when the congregation were singing a holy psalm, he could not listen because an anthem of sin rushed loudly upon his ear and drowned all the blessed strain. When the minister spoke from the pulpit with power and fervid eloquence, and, with his hand on the open Bible, of the sacred truths of our religion, and of saint-like lives and triumphant deaths, and of future bliss or misery un-
- 30 utterable, then did Goodman Brown turn pale, dreading lest the roof should thunder down upon the gray blasphemer and his hearers. Often, awaking suddenly at midnight, he shrank from the bosom of Faith; and at morning or evening, when the family knelt down at prayer, he scowled and muttered to himself, and gazed sternly at his wife, and turned away. And when he had lived
- 35 long, and was borne to his grave a hoary corpse, followed by Faith, an aged woman, and children and grandchildren, a goodly procession, besides neighbors not a few, they carved no hopeful verse upon his tombstone, for his dying hour was gloom.

## THE MAYPOLE OF MERRY MOUNT

A Parable, published in the *Boston Token* of 1836, and included in *Twice-Told Tales* (1837) and in *Legends of New England* (1877). Captain Wollaston, after founding a colony near Plymouth in 1625, left for Virginia, and was succeeded by Thomas Morton, a London lawyer, who sold firearms and rum to the Indians. In 1628 Miles Standish arrested Morton and he was deported, though he returned

later. During his absence, John Endicott and a band of colonists at Salem cut down the "idoll May Pole," renamed the place Mount Dagon, and advised the colonists to mend their ways "else they would find their merry mount but a woful mount." The student who will compare Hawthorne's account with that in Fiske's *Beginnings of New England* or C. F. Adams's *Three Episodes in Massachusetts History* may see how the romancer adapted his materials. Morton's own account of the "revells" appeared in his *New English Canaan* (1637), Book III, Chap. 14; the Puritan version was given in Bradford's *History of Plymouth Plantation* (Davis edition, 1908, p. 238).

"There is an admirable foundation for a philosophic romance in the curious history of the early settlement of Mount Wollaston, or Merry Mount. In the slight sketch here attempted, the facts, recorded on the grave pages of our New England annalists, have wrought themselves, almost spontaneously, into a sort of allegory. The masques, mummeries, and festive customs, described in the text, are in accordance with the manners of the age. Authority on these points may be found in Strutt's Book of English Sports and Pastimes." (Hawthorne's note)

**B**RIGHT were the days at Merry Mount, when the Maypole was the banner staff of that gay colony. They who reared it, should their banner be triumphant, were to pour sunshine over New England's rugged hills, and scatter flower seeds throughout the soil. Jollity and gloom were contending for an empire. Midsummer eve had come, bringing deep verdure to the forest, and roses in her lap, of a more vivid hue than the tender buds of Spring. But May, or her mirthful spirit, dwelt all the year round at Merry Mount, sporting with the Summer months, and reveling with Autumn, and basking in the glow of Winter's fireside. Through a world of toil and care she flitted with a dream-like smile, and came hither to find a home among the lightsome hearts of Merry Mount.

Never had the Maypole been so gayly decked as at sunset on midsummer eve. This venerated emblem was a pine-tree, which had preserved the slender grace of youth, while it equalled the loftiest height of the old wood monarchs. From its top streamed a silken banner, colored like the rainbow. Down nearly to the ground the pole was dressed with birchen boughs, and others of the liveliest green, and some with silvery leaves, fastened by ribbons that fluttered in fantastic knots of twenty different colors, but no sad ones. Garden flowers, and blossoms of the wilderness, laughed gladly forth amid the verdure, so fresh and dewy that they must have grown by magic on that happy pine-tree. Where this green and flowery splendor terminated, the shaft of the Maypole was stained with the seven brilliant hues of the banner at its top. On the lowest green bough hung an abundant wreath of roses, some that had been gathered in the sunniest spots of the forest, and others, of still richer blush, which the colonists had reared from English seed. O, people of the Golden Age, the chief of your husbandry was to raise flowers!

But what was the wild throng that stood hand in hand about the Maypole? It could not be that the fauns and nymphs, when driven from their classic groves and homes of ancient fable, had sought refuge, as all the persecuted did, in the fresh woods of the West. These were Gothic monsters, though perhaps

of Grecian ancestry. On the shoulders of a comely youth uprose the head and branching antlers of a stag; a second, human in all other points, had the grim visage of a wolf; a third, still with the trunk and limbs of a mortal man, showed the beard and horns of a venerable he-goat. There was the likeness of a bear erect, brute in all but his hind legs, which were adorned with pink silk stockings. And here again, almost as wondrous, stood a real bear of the dark forest, lending each of his fore paws to the grasp of a human hand, and as ready for the dance as any in that circle. His inferior nature rose half way, to meet his companions as they stooped. Other faces wore the similitude of man or woman, but distorted or extravagant, with red noses pendulous before their mouths, which seemed of awful depth, and stretched from ear to ear in an eternal fit of laughter. Here might be seen the Salvage Man, well known in heraldry, hairy as a baboon, and girdled with green leaves. By his side, a noble figure, but still a counterfeit, appeared an Indian hunter, with feathery crest and wampum belt. Many of this strange company wore foolscaps, and had little bells appended to their garments, tinkling with a silvery sound, responsive to the inaudible music of their gleesome spirits. Some youths and maidens were of soberer garb, yet well maintained their places in the irregular throng by the expression of wild revelry upon their features. Such were the colonists of Merry Mount, as they stood in the broad smile of sunset round their venerated Maypole.

Had a wanderer, bewildered in the melancholy forest, heard their mirth, and stolen a half-affrighted glance, he might have fancied them the crew of Comus, some already transformed to brutes, some midway between man and beast, and the others rioting in the flow of tipsy jollity that foreran the change. But a band of Puritans, who watched the scene, invisible themselves, compared the masques to those devils and ruined souls with whom their superstition peopled the black wilderness.

Within the ring of monsters appeared the two airiest forms that had ever trodden on any more solid footing than a purple and golden cloud. One was a youth in glistening apparel, with a scarf of the rainbow pattern crosswise on his breast. His right hand held a gilded staff, the ensign of high dignity among the revellers, and his left grasped the slender fingers of a fair maiden, not less gayly decorated than himself. Bright roses glowed in contrast with the dark and glossy curls of each, and were scattered round their feet, or had sprung up spontaneously there. Behind this lightsome couple, so close to the Maypole that its boughs shaded his jovial face, stood the figure of an English priest, canonically dressed, yet decked with flowers, in heathen fashion, and wearing a chaplet of the native vine leaves. By the riot of his rolling eye, and the pagan decorations of his holy garb, he seemed the wildest monster there, and the very Comus of the crew.

"Votaries of the Maypole," cried the flower-decked priest, "merrily, all day long, have the woods echoed to your mirth. But be this your merriest hour, my hearts! Lo, here stand the Lord and Lady of the May, whom I, a clerk of Oxford, and high priest of Merry Mount, am presently to join in holy matrimony.

Up with your nimble spirits, ye morris-dancers, green men, and glee maidens, bears and wolves, and horned gentlemen! Come; a chorus now, rich with the old mirth of Merry England, and the wilder glee of this fresh forest; and then a dance, to show the youthful pair what life is made of, and how airily they should go through it! All ye that love the Maypole, lend your voices to the nuptial song of the Lord and Lady of the May!" 5

This wedlock was more serious than most affairs of Merry Mount, where jest and delusion, trick and fantasy, kept up a continual carnival. The Lord and Lady of the May, though their titles must be laid down at sunset, were really and truly to be partners for the dance of life, beginning the measure that same bright eve. The wreath of roses, that hung from the lowest green bough of the Maypole, had been twined for them, and would be thrown over both their heads, in symbol of their flowery union. When the priest had spoken, therefore, a riotous uproar burst from the rout of monstrous figures. 10

"Begin you the stave, reverend Sir," cried they all; "and never did the woods ring to such a merry peal as we of the Maypole shall send up!" 15

Immediately a prelude of pipe, cithern, and viol, touched with practised minstrelsy, began to play from a neighboring thicket, in such a mirthful cadence that the boughs of the Maypole quivered to the sound. But the May Lord, he of the gilded staff, chancing to look into his Lady's eyes, was wonder struck at the almost pensive glance that met his own. 20

"Edith, sweet Lady of the May," whispered he reproachfully, "is yon wreath of roses a garland to hang above our graves, that you look so sad? O, Edith, this is our golden time! Tarnish it not by any pensive shadow of the mind; for it may be that nothing of futurity will be brighter than the mere remembrance of what is now passing." 25

"That was the very thought that saddened me! How came it in your mind too?" said Edith, in a still lower tone than he, for it was high treason to be sad at Merry Mount. "Therefore do I sigh amid this festive music. And besides, dear Edgar, I struggle as with a dream, and fancy that these shapes of our jovial friends are visionary, and their mirth unreal, and that we are no true Lord and Lady of the May. What is the mystery in my heart?" 30

Just then, as if a spell had loosened them, down came a little shower of withering rose leaves from the Maypole. Alas, for the young lovers! No sooner had their hearts glowed with real passion than they were sensible of something vague and unsubstantial in their former pleasures, and felt a dreary presentiment of inevitable change. From the moment that they truly loved, they had subjected themselves to earth's doom of care and sorrow, and troubled joy, and had no more a home at Merry Mount. That was Edith's mystery. Now leave we the priest to marry them, and the masquers to sport round the Maypole, till the last sunbeam be withdrawn from its summit, and the shadows of the forest mingle gloomily in the dance. Meanwhile, we may discover who these gay people were. 35 40

Two hundred years ago, and more, the old world and its inhabitants became mutually weary of each other. Men voyaged by thousands to the West: some to barter glass beads, and such like jewels, for the furs of the Indian hunter; some to conquer virgin empires; and one stern band to pay. But none of 45

these motives had much weight with the colonists of Merry Mount. Their leaders were men who had sported so long with life, that when Thought and Wisdom came, even these unwelcome guests were led astray by the crowd of vanities which they should have put to flight. Erring Thought and perverted  
 5 Wisdom were made to put on masques and play the fool. The men of whom we speak, after losing the heart's fresh gayety, imagined a wild philosophy of pleasure, and came hither to act out their latest day-dream. They gathered followers from all that giddy tribe whose whole life is like the festal days of soberer men. In their train were minstrels, not unknown in London streets:  
 10 wandering players, whose theatres had been the halls of noblemen; mummers, rope-dancers, and mountebanks, who would long be missed at wakes, church ales, and fairs; in a word, mirth makers of every sort, such as abounded in that age, but now began to be discountenanced by the rapid growth of Puritanism. Light had their footsteps been on land, and as lightly they came across the sea.  
 15 Many had been maddened by their previous troubles into a gay despair; others were as madly gay in the flush of youth, like the May Lord and his Lady; but whatever might be the quality of their mirth, old and young were gay at Merry Mount. The young deemed themselves happy. The elder spirits, if they knew that mirth was but the counterfeit of happiness, yet followed the false  
 20 shadow wilfully, because at least her garments glittered brightest. Sworn triflers of a lifetime, they would not venture among the sober truths of life not even to be truly blest.

All the hereditary pastimes of Old England were transplanted hither. The King of Christmas was duly crowned, and the Lord of Misrule bore potent  
 25 sway. On the Eve of St. John, they felled whole acres of the forest to make bonfires, and danced by the blaze all night, crowned with garlands, and throwing flowers into the flame. At harvest time, though their crop was of the smallest, they made an image with the sheaves of Indian corn, and wreathed it with autumnal garlands, and bore it home triumphantly. But what chiefly character-  
 30 ized the colonists of Merry Mount was their veneration for the Maypole. It has made their true history a poet's tale. Spring decked the hallowed emblem with young blossoms and fresh green boughs; Summer brought roses of the deepest blush, and the perfected foliage of the forest; Autumn enriched it with that red and yellow gorgeousness which converts each wildwood leaf into a painted  
 35 flower; and Winter silvered it with sleet, and hung it round with icicles, till it flashed in the cold sunshine, itself a frozen sunbeam. Thus each alternate season did homage to the Maypole, and paid it a tribute of its own richest splendor. Its votaries danced round it, once, at least, in every month; sometimes they called it their religion, or their altar; but always, it was the banner staff  
 40 of Merry Mount.

Unfortunately, there were men in the new world of a sterner faith than these Maypole worshippers. Not far from Merry Mount was a settlement of Puritans, most dismal wretches, who said their prayers before daylight, and then wrought in the forest or the cornfield till evening made it prayer time  
 45 again. Their weapons were always at hand to shoot down the straggling savage.

11-12. church ales—church festivals. 25. Eve of St. John—Midsummer's Eve, formerly so celebrated.

When they met in conclave, it was never to keep up the old English mirth, but to hear sermons three hours long, or to proclaim bounties on the heads of wolves and the scalps of Indians. Their festivals were fast days, and their chief pastime the singing of psalms. Woe to the youth or maiden who did but dream of a dance! The selectmen nodded to the constable; and there sat the light-heeled reprobate in the stocks; or if he danced, it was round the whipping-post, which might be termed the Puritan Maypole.

A party of these grim Puritans, toiling through the difficult woods, each with a horseload of iron armor to burden his footsteps, would sometimes draw near the sunny precincts of Merry Mount. There were the silken colonists, sporting round their Maypole; perhaps teaching a bear to dance, or striving to communicate their mirth to the grave Indian; or masquerading in the skins of deer and wolves, which they had hunted for that especial purpose. Often, the whole colony were playing at blindman's buff, magistrates and all, with their eyes bandaged, except a single scapegoat, whom the blinded sinners pursued by the tinkling of the bells at his garments. Once, it is said, they were seen following a flower-decked corpse, with merriment and festive music, to his grave. But did the dead man laugh? In their quietest times, they sang ballads and told tales, for the edification of their pious visitors; or perplexed them with juggling tricks; or grinned at them through horse collars; and when sport itself grew wearisome, they made game of their own stupidity, and began a yawning match. At the very least of these enormities, the men of iron shook their heads and frowned so darkly that the revellers looked up, imagining that a momentary cloud had overcast the sunshine, which was to be perpetual there. On the other hand, the Puritans affirmed that, when a psalm was pealing from their place of worship, the echo which the forest sent them back seemed often like the chorus of a jolly catch, closing with a roar of laughter. Who but the fiend, and his bond slaves, the crew of Merry Mount, had thus disturbed them? In due time, a feud arose, stern and bitter on one side, and as serious on the other as anything could be among such light spirits as had sworn allegiance to the Maypole. The future complexion of New England was involved in this important quarrel. Should the grizzly saints establish their jurisdiction over the gay sinners, then would their spirits darken all the climate, and make it a land of clouded visages, of hard toil, of sermon and psalm forever. But should the banner staff of Merry Mount be fortunate, sunshine would break upon the hills, and flowers would beautify the forest, and late posterity do homage to the Maypole.

After these authentic passages from history, we return to the nuptials of the Lord and Lady of the May. Alas! we have delayed too long, and must darken our tale too suddenly. As we glance again at the Maypole, a solitary sunbeam is fading from the summit, and leaves only a faint, golden tinge blended with the hues of the rainbow banner. Even that dim light is now withdrawn, relinquishing the whole domain of Merry Mount to the evening gloom, which has rushed so instantaneously from the black surrounding woods. But some of these black shadows have rushed forth in human shape.

Yes, with the setting sun, the last day of mirth had passed from Merry Mount. The ring of gay masquers was disordered and broken; the stag lowered



his antlers in dismay; the wolf grew weaker than a lamb; the bells of the morris-dancers tinkled with tremulous affright. The Puritans had played a characteristic part in the Maypole mummings. Their darksome figures were intermixed with the wild shapes of their foes, and made the scene a picture of the moment, when waking thoughts start up amid the scattered fantasies of a dream. The leader of the hostile party stood in the centre of the circle, while the route of monsters cowered around him, like evil spirits in the presence of a dread magician. No fantastic foolery could look him in the face. So stern was the energy of his aspect, that the whole man, visage, frame, and soul, seemed wrought of iron, gifted with life and thought, yet all of one substance with his headpiece and breastplate. It was the Puritan of Puritans; it was Endicott himself!

"Stand off, priest of Baal!" said he, with a grim frown, and laying no reverent hand upon the surplice. "I know thee, Blackstone! Thou art the man who couldst not abide the rule even of thine own corrupted church, and hast come hither to preach iniquity, and to give example of it in thy life. But now shall it be seen that the Lord hath sanctified this wilderness for his peculiar people. Woe unto them that would defile it! And first, for this flower-decked abomination, the altar of thy worship!"

And with his keen sword Endicott assaulted the hallowed Maypole. Nor long did it resist his arm. It groaned with a dismal sound; it showered leaves and rosebuds upon the remorseless enthusiast; and finally, with all its green boughs and ribbons and flowers, symbolic of departed pleasures, down fell the banner staff of Merry Mount. As it sank, tradition says, the evening sky grew darker, and the woods threw forth a more sombre shadow.

"There," cried Endicott, looking triumphantly on his work, "there lies the only Maypole in New England! The thought is strong within me that, by its fall, is shadowed forth the fate of light and idle mirth makers, amongst us and our posterity. Amen, saith John Endicott."

"Amen!" echoed his followers.

But the votaries of the Maypole gave one groan for their idol. At the sound, the Puritan leader glanced at the crew of Comus, each a figure of broad mirth, yet, at this moment, strangely expressive of sorrow and dismay.

"Valiant captain," quoth Peter Palfrey, the Ancient of the band, "what order shall be taken with the prisoners?"

"I thought not to repent me of cutting down a Maypole," replied Endicott, "yet now I could find in my heart to plant it again, and give each of these bestial pagans one other dance round their idol. It would have served rarely for a whipping-post!"

"But there are pine-trees enow," suggested the lieutenant.

"True, good Ancient," said the leader. "Wherefore, bind the heathen crew,

12. **Endicott**—John Endicott (about 1588-1665), governor of Massachusetts Bay after 1644.

14. **Blackstone**—"Did Governor Endicott speak less positively, we should suspect a mistake here. The Rev. Mr. Blackstone, though an eccentric, is not known to have been an immoral man. We rather doubt his identity with the priest of Merry Mount." (Hawthorne's note) Blackstone was a young Episcopal clergyman who entertained Winthrop on his arrival in Boston, and was usually on good terms with the Puritans. 34. **Peter Palfrey**—mentioned also in Hawthorne's "Main Street." 34. **Ancient**—Standard-bearer or ensign.

and bestow on them a small matter of stripes apiece, as earnest of our future justice. Set some of the rogues in the stocks to rest themselves, so soon as Providence shall bring us to one of our own well-ordered settlements, where such accommodations may be found. Further penalties, such as branding and cropping of ears, shall be thought of hereafter.”

5

“How many stripes for the priest?” inquired Ancient Palfrey.

“None as yet,” answered Endicott, bending his iron frown upon the culprit. “It must be for the Great and General Court to determine, whether stripes and long imprisonment, and other grievous penalty, may atone for his transgressions. Let him look to himself! For such as violate our civil order, it may be permitted us to show mercy. But woe to the wretch that troubleth our religion!”

10

“And this dancing bear,” resumed the officer. “Must he share the stripes of his fellows?”

“Shoot him through the head!” said the energetic Puritan. “I suspect witchcraft in the beast.”

15

“Here be a couple of shining ones,” continued Peter Palfrey, pointing his weapon at the Lord and Lady of the May. “They seem to be of high station among these misdoers. Methinks their dignity will not be fitted with less than a double share of stripes.”

20

Endicott rested on his sword, and closely surveyed the dress and aspect of the hapless pair. There they stood, pale, downcast, and apprehensive. Yet there was an air of mutual support, and of pure affection, seeking aid and giving it, that showed them to be man and wife, with the sanction of a priest upon their love. The youth, in the peril of the moment, had dropped his gilded staff, and thrown his arm about the Lady of the May, who leaned against his breast, too lightly to burden him, but with weight enough to express that their destinies were linked together, for good or evil. They looked first at each other, and then into the grim captain’s face. There they stood, in the first hour of wedlock, while the idle pleasures, of which their companions were the emblems, had given place to the sternest cares of life, personified by the dark Puritans. But never had their youthful beauty seemed so pure and high as when its glow was chastened by adversity.

25

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“Youth,” said Endicott, “ye stand in an evil case, thou and thy maiden wife. Make ready presently, for I am minded that ye shall both have a token to remember your wedding day!”

35

“Stern man,” cried the May Lord, “how can I move thee? Were the means at hand, I would resist to the death. Being powerless, I entreat! Do with me as thou wilt, but let Edith go untouched!”

“Not so,” replied the immitigable zealot. “We are not wont to show an idle courtesy to that sex, which requireth the stricter discipline. What sayest thou, maid? Shall thy silken bridegroom suffer thy share of the penalty, besides his own?”

40

“Be it death,” said Edith, “and lay it all on me!”

Truly, as Endicott had said, the poor lovers stood in a woful case. Their foes

45

**8. Great and General Court**—the lawmaking body, which held four sessions a year.

were triumphant, their friends captive and abased, their home desolate, the benighted wilderness around them, and a rigorous destiny, in the shape of the Puritan leader, their only guide. Yet the deepening twilight could not altogether conceal that the iron man was softened; he smiled at the fair spectacle  
 5 of early love; he almost sighed for the inevitable blight of early hopes.

"The troubles of life have come hastily on this young couple," observed Endicott. "We will see how they comport themselves under their present trials ere we burden them with greater. If, among the spoil, there be any garments of a more decent fashion, let them be put upon this May Lord and his Lady,  
 10 instead of their glistening vanities. Look to it, some of you."

"And shall not the youth's hair be cut?" asked Peter Palfrey, looking with abhorrence at the love-lock and long glossy curls of the young man.

"Crop it forthwith, and that in the true pumpkin-shell fashion," answered the captain. "Then bring them along with us, but more gently than their fel-  
 15 lows. There be qualities in the youth, which may make him valiant to fight, and sober to toil, and pious to pray; and in the maiden, that may fit her to become a mother in our Israel, bringing up babes in better nurture than her own hath been. Nor think ye, young ones, that they are the happiest, even in our lifetime of a moment, who misspend it in dancing round a Maypole!"

And Endicott, the severest Puritan of all who laid the rock foundation of New England, lifted the wreath of roses from the ruin of the Maypole, and threw it, with his own gauntleted hand, over the heads of the Lord and Lady of the May. It was a deed of prophecy. As the moral gloom of the world over-  
 20 powers all systematic gayety, even so was their home of wild mirth made desolate amid the sad forest. They returned to it no more. But as their flowery  
 25 garland was wreathed of the brightest roses that had grown there, so, in the tie that united them, were intertwined all the purest and best of their early joys. They went heavenward, supporting each other along the difficult path which it was their lot to tread, and never wasted one regretful thought on  
 30 the vanities of Merry Mount.

## THE MINISTER'S BLACK VEIL

A PARABLE \*

Published in the *Boston Token*, 1836; reprinted in *Twice-Told Tales* (1837).

**T**HE SEXTON stood in the porch of Milford meeting-house, pulling busily at the bell-rope. The old people of the village came stooping along the street. Children, with bright faces, tripped merrily beside their parents, or mimicked a graver gait, in the conscious dignity of their Sunday clothes.  
 35 Spruce bachelors looked sidelong at the pretty maidens, and fancied that the

\* A Parable—"Another clergyman in New England, Mr. Joseph Moody, of York, Maine, who died about eighty years since, made himself remarkable by the same eccentricity that is here related of the Reverend Mr. Hooper. In his case, however, the symbol had a different import. In early life he had accidentally killed a beloved friend; and from that day till the hour of his own death, he hid his face from men." (Hawthorne's note)

Sabbath sunshine made them prettier than on week days. When the throng had mostly streamed into the porch, the sexton began to toll the bell, keeping his eye on the Reverend Mr. Hooper's door. The first glimpse of the clergymen's figure was the signal for the bell to cease its summons.

"But what has good Parson Hooper got upon his face?" cried the sexton in astonishment. 5

All within hearing immediately turned about, and beheld the semblance of Mr. Hooper, pacing slowly his meditative way towards the meeting-house. With one accord they started, expressing more wonder than if some strange minister were coming to dust the cushions of Mr. Hooper's pulpit. 10

"Are you sure it is our parson?" inquired Goodman Gray of the sexton.

"Of a certainty it is good Mr. Hooper," replied the sexton. "He was to have exchanged pulpits with Parson Shute, of Westbury; but Parson Shute sent to excuse himself yesterday, being to preach a funeral sermon."

The cause of so much amazement may appear sufficiently slight. Mr. Hooper, a gentlemanly person, of about thirty, though still a bachelor, was dressed with due clerical neatness, as if a careful wife had starched his band, and brushed the weekly dust from his Sunday's garb. There was but one thing remarkable in his appearance. Swathed about his forehead, and hanging down over his face, so low as to be shaken by his breath, Mr. Hooper had on a black veil. 15  
On a nearer view it seemed to consist of two folds of crape, which entirely concealed his features, except the mouth and chin, but probably did not intercept his sight, further than to give a darkened aspect to all living and inanimate things. With this gloomy shade before him, good Mr. Hooper walked onward, at a slow and quiet pace, stooping somewhat, and looking on the ground, as is 20  
customary with abstracted men, yet nodding kindly to those of his parishioners who still waited on the meeting-house steps. But so wonder-struck were they that his greeting hardly met with a return.

"I can't really feel as if good Mr. Hooper's face was behind that piece of crape," said the sexton. 25

"I don't like it," muttered an old woman, as she hobbled into the meeting-house. "He has changed himself into something awful, only by hiding his face."

"Our parson has gone mad!" cried Goodman Gray, following him across the threshold. 30

A rumor of some unaccountable phenomenon had preceded Mr. Hooper into the meeting-house, and set all the congregation astir. Few could refrain from twisting their heads towards the door; many stood upright, and turned directly about; while several little boys clambered upon the seats, and came down again with a terrible racket. There was a general bustle, a rustling of the women's gowns and shuffling of the men's feet, greatly at variance with that hushed 35  
repose which should attend the entrance of the minister. But Mr. Hooper appeared not to notice the perturbation of his people. He entered with an almost noiseless step, bent his head mildly to the pews on each side, and bowed as he passed his oldest parishioner, a white-haired great-grandsire, who occupied an arm-chair in the centre of the aisle. It was strange to observe how slowly this 40  
venerable man became conscious of something singular in the appearance of his pastor. He seemed not fully to partake of the prevailing wonder, till Mr. 45

Hooper had ascended the stairs, and showed himself in the pulpit, face to face with his congregation, except for the black veil. That mysterious emblem was never once withdrawn. It shook with his measured breath as he gave out the psalm; it threw its obscurity between him and the holy page, as he read the  
5 Scriptures; and while he prayed, the veil lay heavily on his uplifted countenance. Did he seek to hide it from the dread Being whom he was addressing?

Such was the effect of this simple piece of crape, that more than one woman of delicate nerves was forced to leave the meeting-house. Yet perhaps the pale-faced congregation was almost as fearful a sight to the minister, as his black  
10 veil to them.

Mr. Hooper had the reputation of a good preacher, but not an energetic one: he strove to win his people heavenward by mild, persuasive influences, rather than to drive them thither by the thunders of the Word. The sermon which he now delivered was marked by the same characteristics of style and manner  
15 as the general series of his pulpit oratory. But there was something, either in the sentiment of the discourse itself, or in the imagination of the auditors, which made it greatly the most powerful effort that they had ever heard from their pastor's lips. It was tinged, rather more darkly than usual, with the gentle gloom of Mr. Hooper's temperament. The subject had reference to secret sin,  
20 and those sad mysteries which we hide from our nearest and dearest, and would fain conceal from our own consciousness, even forgetting that the Omniscient can detect them. A subtle power was breathed into his words. Each member of the congregation, the most innocent girl, and the man of hardened breast, felt as if the preacher had crept upon them, behind his awful veil, and  
25 discovered their hoarded iniquity of deed or thought. Many spread their clasped hands on their bosoms. There was nothing terrible in what Mr. Hooper said, at least, no violence; and yet, with every tremor of his melancholy voice, the hearers quaked. An unsought pathos came hand in hand with awe. So sensible were the audience of some unwonted attribute in their minister, that they  
30 longed for a breath of wind to blow aside the veil, almost believing that a stranger's visage would be discovered, though the form, gesture, and voice were those of Mr. Hooper.

At the close of the services, the people hurried out with indecorous confusion, eager to communicate their pent-up amazement, and conscious of lighter spirits  
35 the moment they lost sight of the black veil. Some gathered in little circles, huddled closely together, with their mouths all whispering in the centre; some went homeward alone, wrapt in silent meditation; some talked loudly, and profaned the Sabbath-day with ostentatious laughter. A few shook their sagacious heads, intimating that they could penetrate the mystery; while one or  
40 two affirmed that there was no mystery at all, but only that Mr. Hooper's eyes were so weakened by the midnight lamp, as to require a shade. After a brief interval, forth came good Mr. Hooper also, in the rear of his flock. Turning his veiled face from one group to another, he paid due reverence to the hoary heads, saluted the middle aged, with kind dignity as their friend and spiritual  
45 guide, greeted the young with mingled authority and love, and laid his hands on the little children's heads to bless them. Such was always his custom on the Sabbath-day. Strange and bewildered looks repaid him for his courtesy. None,

as on former occasions, aspired to the honor of walking by their pastor's side. Old Squire Saunders, doubtless by an accidental lapse of memory, neglected to invite Mr. Hooper to his table, where the good clergyman had been wont to bless the food, almost every Sunday since his settlement. He returned, therefore, to the parsonage, and, at the moment of closing the door, was observed to look back upon the people, all of whom had their eyes fixed upon the minister. A sad smile gleamed faintly from beneath the black veil, and flickered about his mouth, glimmering as he disappeared.

"How strange," said a lady, "that a simple black veil, such as any woman might wear on her bonnet, should become such a terrible thing on Mr. Hooper's face!"

"Something must surely be amiss with Mr. Hooper's intellects," observed her husband, the physician of the village. "But the strangest part of the affair is the effect of this vagary, even on a sober-minded man like myself. The black veil, though it covers only our pastor's face, throws its influence over his whole person, and makes him ghostlike from head to foot. Do you not feel it so?"

"Truly do I," replied the lady; "and I would not be alone with him for the world. I wonder he is not afraid to be alone with himself!"

"Men sometimes are so," said her husband.

The afternoon service was attended with similar circumstances. At its conclusion, the bell tolled for the funeral of a young lady. The relatives and friends were assembled in the house, and the more distant acquaintances stood about the door, speaking of the good qualities of the deceased, when their talk was interrupted by the appearance of Mr. Hooper, still covered with his black veil. It was now an appropriate emblem. The clergyman stepped into the room where the corpse was laid, and bent over the coffin, to take a last farewell of his deceased parishioner. As he stooped, the veil hung straight down from his forehead, so that, if her eyelids had not been closed forever, the dead maiden might have seen his face. Could Mr. Hooper be fearful of her glance, that he so hastily caught back the black veil? A person who watched the interview between the dead and living, scrupled not to affirm, that, at the instant when the clergyman's features were disclosed, the corpse had slightly shuddered, rustling the shroud and muslin cap, though the countenance retained the composure of death. A superstitious old woman was the only witness of this prodigy. From the coffin Mr. Hooper passed into the chamber of the mourners, and thence to the head of the staircase, to make the funeral prayer. It was a tender and heart-dissolving prayer, full of sorrow, yet so imbued with celestial hopes, that the music of a heavenly harp, swept by the fingers of the dead, seemed faintly to be heard among the saddest accents of the minister. The people trembled, though they but darkly understood him, when he prayed that they, and himself, and all of mortal race, might be ready, as he trusted this young maiden had been, for the dreadful hour that should snatch the veil from their faces. The bearers went heavily forth, and the mourners followed, saddening all the street, with the dead before them, and Mr. Hooper in his black veil behind.

"Why do you look back?" said one in the procession to his partner.

"I had a fancy," replied she, "that the minister and the maiden's spirit were walking hand in hand."

"And so had I, at the same moment," said the other.

That night, the handsomest couple in Milford village were to be joined in wedlock. Though reckoned a melancholy man, Mr. Hooper had a placid cheerfulness for such occasions, which often excited a sympathetic smile where livelier merriment would have been thrown away. There was no quality of his disposition which made him more beloved than this. The company at the wedding awaited his arrival with impatience, trusting that the strange awe, which had gathered over him throughout the day, would now be dispelled. But such was not the result. When Mr. Hooper came, the first thing that their eyes rested on was the same horrible black veil, which had added deeper gloom to the funeral, and could portend nothing but evil to the wedding. Such was its immediate effect on the guests that a cloud seemed to have rolled duskily from beneath the black crape, and dimmed the light of the candles. The bridal pair stood up before the minister. But the bride's cold fingers quivered in the tremulous hand of the bridegroom, and her deathlike paleness caused a whisper that the maiden who had been buried a few hours before was come from her grave to be married. If ever another wedding were so dismal, it was that famous one where they tolled the wedding knell. After performing the ceremony, Mr. Hooper raised a glass of wine to his lips, wishing happiness to the new-married couple in a strain of mild pleasantry that ought to have brightened the features of the guests, like a cheerful gleam from the hearth. At that instant, catching a glimpse of his figure in the looking-glass, the black veil involved his own spirit in the horror with which it overwhelmed all others. His frame shuddered, his lips grew white, he spilt the untasted wine upon the carpet, and rushed forth into the darkness. For the Earth, too, had on her Black Veil.

The next day, the whole village of Milford talked of little else than Parson Hooper's black veil. That, and the mystery concealed behind it, supplied a topic for discussion between acquaintances meeting in the street, and good women gossiping at their open windows. It was the first item of news that the tavern-keeper told to his guests. The children babbled of it on their way to school. One imitative little imp covered his face with an old black handkerchief, thereby so affrighting his playmates that the panic seized himself, and he well-nigh lost his wits by his own waggery.

It was remarkable that of all the busybodies and impertinent people in the parish, not one ventured to put the plain question to Mr. Hooper, wherefore he did this thing. Hitherto, whenever there appeared the slightest call for such interference, he had never lacked advisers, nor shown himself averse to be guided by their judgment. If he erred at all, it was by so painful a degree of self-distrust, that even the mildest censure would lead him to consider an indiffer-ent action as a crime. Yet, though so well acquainted with this amiable weakness, no individual among his parishioners chose to make the black veil a subject of friendly remonstrance. There was a feeling of dread, neither plainly confessed nor carefully concealed, which caused each to shift the responsibility upon another, till at length it was found expedient to send a deputation of the church, in order to deal with Mr. Hooper about the mystery, before it should grow into a scandal. Never did an embassy so ill discharge its duties. The minister received them with friendly courtesy, but became silent, after they were

seated, leaving to his visitors the whole burden of introducing their important business. The topic, it might be supposed, was obvious enough. There was the black veil swathed round Mr. Hooper's forehead, and concealing every feature above his placid mouth, on which, at times, they could perceive the glimmering of a melancholy smile. But that piece of crape, to their imagination, seemed to hang down before his heart, the symbol of a fearful secret between him and them. Were the veil but cast aside, they might speak freely of it, but not till then. Thus they sat a considerable time, speechless, confused, and shrinking uneasily from Mr. Hooper's eye, which they felt to be fixed upon them with an invisible glance. Finally, the deputies returned abashed to their constituents, pronouncing the matter too weighty to be handled, except by a council of the churches, if, indeed, it might not require a general synod.

But there was one person in the village unappalled by the awe with which the black veil had impressed all beside herself. When the deputies returned without an explanation, or even venturing to demand one, she, with the calm energy of her character, determined to chase away the strange cloud that appeared to be settling round Mr. Hooper, every moment more darkly than before. As his plighted wife, it should be her privilege to know what the black veil concealed. At the minister's first visit, therefore, she entered upon the subject, with a direct simplicity, which made the task easier both for him and her. After he had seated himself, she fixed her eyes steadfastly upon the veil, but could discern nothing of the dreadful gloom that had so overawed the multitude: it was but a double fold of crape, hanging down from his forehead to his mouth, and slightly stirring with his breath.

"No," said she aloud, and smiling, "there is nothing terrible in this piece of crape, except that it hides a face which I am always glad to look upon. Come, good sir, let the sun shine from behind the cloud. First lay aside your black veil: then tell me why you put it on."

Mr. Hooper's smile glimmered faintly.

"There is an hour to come," said he, "when all of us shall cast aside our veils. Take it not amiss, beloved friend, if I wear this piece of crape till then."

"Your words are a mystery, too," returned the young lady. "Take away the veil from them, at least."

"Elizabeth, I will," said he, "so far as my vow may suffer me. Know, then, this veil is a type and a symbol, and I am bound to wear it ever, both in light and darkness, in solitude and before the gaze of multitudes, and as with strangers, so with my familiar friends. No mortal eye will see it withdrawn. This dismal shade must separate me from the world: even you, Elizabeth, can never come behind it!"

"What grievous affliction hath befallen you," she earnestly inquired, "that you should thus darken your eyes forever?"

"If it be a sign of mourning," replied Mr. Hooper, "I, perhaps, like most other mortals, have sorrows dark enough to be typified by a black veil."

"But what if the world will not believe that it is the type of an innocent sorrow?" urged Elizabeth. "Beloved and respected as you are, there may be whispers, that you hide your face under the consciousness of secret sin. For the sake of your holy office, do away this scandal!"



The color rose into her cheeks as she intimated the nature of the rumors that were already abroad in the village. But Mr. Hooper's mildness did not forsake him. He even smiled again—that same sad smile, which always appeared like a faint glimmering of light, proceeding from the obscurity beneath the veil.

5 “If I hide my face for sorrow, there is cause enough,” he merely replied; “and if I cover it for secret sin, what mortal might not do the same?”

And with this gentle, but unconquerable obstinacy did he resist all her entreaties. At length Elizabeth sat silent. For a few moments she appeared lost in thought, considering, probably, what new methods might be tried to withdraw  
10 her lover from so dark a fantasy, which, if it had no other meaning, was perhaps a symptom of mental disease. Though of a firmer character than his own, the tears rolled down her cheeks. But, in an instant, as it were, a new feeling took the place of sorrow: her eyes were fixed insensibly on the black veil, when, like a sudden twilight in the air, its terrors fell around her. She arose, and stood  
15 trembling before him.

“And do you feel it then, at last?” said he mournfully.

She made no reply, but covered her eyes with her hand, and turned to leave the room. He rushed forward and caught her arm.

“Have patience with me, Elizabeth!” cried he, passionately. “Do not desert  
20 me, though this veil must be between us here on earth. Be mine, and hereafter there shall be no veil over my face, no darkness between our souls! It is but a mortal veil—it is not for eternity! O! you know not how lonely I am, and how frightened, to be alone behind my black veil. Do not leave me in this miserable obscurity forever!”

25 “Lift the veil but once, and look me in the face,” said she.

“Never! It cannot be!” replied Mr. Hooper.

“Then farewell!” said Elizabeth.

She withdrew her arm from his grasp, and slowly departed, pausing at the door, to give one long, shuddering gaze, that seemed almost to penetrate the  
30 mystery of the black veil. But, even amid his grief, Mr. Hooper smiled to think that only a material emblem had separated him from happiness, though the horrors, which it shadowed forth, must be drawn darkly between the fondest of lovers.

From that time no attempts were made to remove Mr. Hooper's black veil,  
35 or, by a direct appeal, to discover the secret which it was supposed to hide. By persons who claimed a superiority to popular prejudice, it was reckoned merely an eccentric whim, such as often mingles with the sober actions of men otherwise rational, and tinges them all with its own semblance of insanity. But with the multitude, good Mr. Hooper was irreparably a bugbear. He could not walk  
40 the street with any peace of mind, so conscious was he that the gentle and timid would turn aside to avoid him, and that others would make it a point of hardness to throw themselves in his way. The impertinence of the latter class compelled him to give up his customary walk at sunset to the burial ground; for when he leaned pensively over the gate, there would always be faces behind the  
45 gravestones, peeping at his black veil. A fable went the rounds that the stare of the dead people drove him thence. It grieved him, to the very depth of his kind heart, to observe how the children fled from his approach, breaking up

their merriest sports, while his melancholy figure was yet afar off. Their instinctive dread caused him to feel more strongly than aught else, that a preternatural horror was interwoven with the threads of the black crape. In truth, his own antipathy to the veil was known to be so great, that he never willingly passed before a mirror, nor stooped to drink at a still fountain, lest, in its peaceful bosom, he should be affrighted by himself. This was what gave plausibility to the whispers, that Mr. Hooper's conscience tortured him for some great crime too horrible to be entirely concealed, or otherwise than so obscurely intimated. Thus, from beneath the black veil, there rolled a cloud into the sunshine, an ambiguity of sin or sorrow, which enveloped the poor minister, so that love or sympathy could never reach him. It was said, that ghost and fiend consorted with him there. With self-shudderings and outward terrors, he walked continually in its shadow, groping darkly within his own soul, or gazing through a medium that saddened the whole world. Even the lawless wind, it was believed, respected his dreadful secret, and never blew aside the veil. But still good Mr. Hooper sadly smiled at the pale visages of the worldly throng as he passed by.

Among all its bad influences, the black veil had the one desirable effect, of making its wearer a very efficient clergyman. By the aid of his mysterious emblem—for there was no other apparent cause—he became a man of awful power, over souls that were in agony for sin. His converts always regarded him with a dread peculiar to themselves, affirming, though but figuratively, that, before he brought them to celestial light, they had been with him behind the black veil. Its gloom, indeed, enabled him to sympathize with all dark affections. Dying sinners cried aloud for Mr. Hooper, and would not yield their breath till he appeared; though ever, as he stooped to whisper consolation, they shuddered at the veiled face so near their own. Such were the terrors of the black veil, even when Death had bared his visage! Strangers came long distances to attend service at his church, with the mere idle purpose of gazing at his figure, because it was forbidden them to behold his face. But many were made to quake ere they departed! Once, during Governor Belcher's administration, Mr. Hooper was appointed to preach the election sermon. Covered with his black veil, he stood before the chief magistrate, the council, and the representatives, and wrought so deep an impression, that the legislative measures of that year were characterized by all the gloom and piety of our earliest ancestral sway.

In this manner Mr. Hooper spent a long life, irreproachable in outward act, yet shrouded in dismal suspicions; kind and loving, though unloved, and dimly feared; a man apart from men, shunned in their health and joy, but ever summoned to their aid in mortal anguish. As years wore on, shedding their snows above his sable veil, he acquired a name throughout the New England churches, and they called him Father Hooper. Nearly all his parishioners, who were of mature age when he was settled, had been borne away by many a funeral: he had one congregation in the church, and a more crowded one in the church-

31. Governor Belcher's—governor of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, 1730-41. The election sermon was an important occasion. Cf. *The Scarlet Letter*, and Alice Morse Earle, *Customs and Fashions in Old New England*, Scribner, 1893, p. 225.

yard; and having wrought so late into the evening, and done his work so well, it was now good Father Hooper's turn to rest.

Several persons were visible by the shaded candle-light, in the death chamber of the old clergyman. Natural connections he had none. But there was the decorously grave, though unmoved physician, seeking only to mitigate the last pangs of the patient whom he could not save. There were the deacons, and other eminently pious members of his church. There, also, was the Reverend Mr. Clark, of Westbury, a young and zealous divine, who had ridden in haste to pray by the bedside of the expiring minister. There was the nurse, no hired handmaiden of death, but one whose calm affection had endured thus long in secrecy, in solitude, amid the chill of age, and would not perish, even at the dying hour. Who, but Elizabeth! And there lay the hoary head of good Father Hooper upon the death pillow, with the black veil still swathed about his brow, and reaching down over his face, so that each more difficult gasp of his faint breath caused it to stir. All through life that piece of crape had hung between him and the world: it had separated him from cheerful brotherhood and woman's love, and kept him in that saddest of all prisons, his own heart; and still it lay upon his face, as if to deepen the gloom of his darksome chamber, and shade him from the sunshine of eternity.

For some time previous, his mind had been confused, wavering doubtfully between the past and the present, and hovering forward, as it were, at intervals, into the indistinctness of the world to come. There had been feverish turns, which tossed him from side to side, and wore away what little strength he had. But in his most convulsive struggles, and in the wildest vagaries of his intellect, when no other thought retained its sober influence, he still showed an awful solicitude lest the black veil should slip aside. Even if his bewildered soul could have forgotten, there was a faithful woman at his pillow, who, with averted eyes, would have covered that aged face, which she had last beheld in the comeliness of manhood. At length the death-stricken old man lay quietly in the torpor of mental and bodily exhaustion, with an imperceptible pulse, and breath that grew fainter and fainter, except when a long, deep, and irregular inspiration seemed to prelude the flight of his spirit.

The minister of Westbury approached the bedside.

"Venerable Father Hooper," said he, "the moment of your release is at hand. Are you ready for the lifting of the veil that shuts in time from eternity?"

Father Hooper at first replied merely by a feeble motion of his head; then, apprehensive, perhaps, that his meaning might be doubtful, he exerted himself to speak.

"Yea," said he, in faint accents, "my soul hath a patient weariness until that veil be lifted."

"And is it fitting," resumed the Reverend Mr. Clark, "that a man so given to prayer, of such a blameless example, holy in deed and thought, so far as mortal judgment may pronounce; is it fitting that a father in the church should leave a shadow on his memory, that may seem to blacken a life so pure? I pray you, my venerable brother, let not this thing be! Suffer us to be gladdened by your triumphant aspect, as you go to your reward. Before the veil of eternity be lifted, let me cast aside this black veil from your face!"

And thus speaking, the Reverend Mr. Clark bent forward to reveal the mystery of so many years. But, exerting a sudden energy, that made all the beholders stand aghast, Father Hooper snatched both his hands from beneath the bedclothes, and pressed them strongly on the black veil, resolute to struggle, if the minister of Westbury would contend with a dying man. 5

"Never!" cried the veiled clergyman. "On earth, never!"

"Dark old man!" exclaimed the affrighted minister, "with what horrible crime upon your soul are you now passing to the judgment?"

Father Hooper's breath heaved; it rattled in his throat; but, with a mighty effort, grasping forward with his hands, he caught hold of life, and held it back till he should speak. He even raised himself in bed; and there he sat, shivering with the arms of death around him, while the black veil hung down, awful, at that last moment, in the gathered terrors of a lifetime. And yet the faint, sad smile, so often there, now seemed to glimmer from its obscurity, and linger on Father Hooper's lips. 10 15

"Why do you tremble at me alone?" cried he, turning his veiled face round the circle of pale spectators. "Tremble also at each other! Have men avoided me, and women shown no pity, and children screamed and fled, only for my black veil? What, but the mystery which it obscurely typifies, has made this piece of crape so awful? When the friend shows his inmost heart to his friend; the lover to his best beloved; when man does not vainly shrink from the eye of his Creator, loathsomely treasuring up the secret of his sin; then deem me a monster, for the symbol beneath which I have lived, and die! I look around me, and, lo! on every visage a Black Veil!" 20

While his auditors shrank from one another, in mutual affright, Father Hooper fell back upon his pillow, a veiled corpse with a faint smile lingering on the lips. Still veiled, they laid him in his coffin, and a veiled corpse they bore him to the grave. The grass of many years has sprung up and withered on that grave, the burial stone is moss-grown, and good Mr. Hooper's face is dust; but awful is still the thought that it mouldered beneath the Black Veil! 25 30

## ENDICOTT AND THE RED CROSS

Published in the *Salem Gazette*, November 14, 1837, anonymously in the *Boston Token* of 1838. Included in *Twice-Told Tales*, Vol. II (1842), and in *Legends of New England* (1877). The story is based on a historical incident of November, 1634. Endicott, according to Fiske's *Beginnings of New England*, "was honest and conscientious, but passionate, domineering, and very deficient in tact." John Winthrop's *Journal* records the episode, November 5 (1634-35).

AT NOON of an autumnal day, more than two centuries ago, the English colors were displayed by the standard-bearer of the Salem trainband, which had mustered for martial exercise under the orders of John Endicott. It was a period when the religious exiles were accustomed often to buckle on their armor, and practise the handling of their weapons of war. Since the 35

23. symbol—Hawthorne's fondness for symbolism may be noted elsewhere. Poe's explanation of the mystery may be considered, as given in his review of *Twice-Told Tales*.

first settlement of New England, its prospects had never been so dismal. The dissensions between Charles the First and his subjects were then, and for several years afterwards, confined to the floor of Parliament. The measures of the King and ministry were rendered more tyrannically violent by an opposition, 5 which had not yet acquired sufficient confidence in its own strength to resist royal injustice with the sword. The bigoted and haughty primate, Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, controlled the religious affairs of the realm, and was consequently invested with powers which might have wrought the utter ruin of the two Puritan colonies, Plymouth and Massachusetts. There is evidence on 10 record that our forefathers perceived their danger, but were resolved that their infant country should not fall without a struggle, even beneath the giant strength of the King's right arm.

Such was the aspect of the times when the folds of the English banner, with the Red Cross in its field, were flung out over a company of Puritans. Their 15 leader, the famous Endicott, was a man of stern and resolute countenance, the effect of which was heightened by a grizzled beard that swept the upper portion of his breastplate. This piece of armor was so highly polished that the whole surrounding scene had its image in the glittering steel. The central object in the mirrored picture was an edifice of humble architecture with neither 20 steeple nor bell to proclaim it—what nevertheless it was—the house of prayer. A token of the perils of the wilderness was seen in the grim head of a wolf, which had just been slain within the precincts of the town, and according to the regular mode of claiming the bounty, was nailed on the porch of the meeting-house. The blood was still plashing on the doorstep. There happened to 25 be visible, at the same noontide hour, so many other characteristics of the times and manners of the Puritans, that we must endeavor to represent them in a sketch, though far less vividly than they were reflected in the polished breastplate of John Endicott.

In close vicinity to the sacred edifice appeared that important engine of 30 Puritanic authority, the whipping-post—with the soil around it well trodden by the feet of evil doers, who had there been disciplined. At one corner of the meeting-house was the pillory, and at the other the stocks; and, by a singular good fortune for our sketch, the head of an Episcopalian and suspected Catholic was grotesquely incased in the former machine; while a fellow-criminal, 35 who had boisterously quaffed a health to the king, was confined by the legs in the latter. Side by side, on the meeting-house steps, stood a male and female figure. The man was a tall, lean, haggard personification of fanaticism, bearing on his breast this label,—A WANTON GOSPELLER,—which betokened that he had dared to give interpretations of Holy Writ unsanctioned by the infallible judg- 40 ment of the civil and religious rulers. His aspect showed no lack of zeal to maintain his heterodoxies, even at the stake. The woman wore a cleft stick on her tongue, in appropriate retribution for having wagged that unruly member against the elders of the church; and her countenance and gestures gave much cause to apprehend that, the moment the stick should be removed, a repetition 45 of the offence would demand new ingenuity in chastising it.

6. Laud—William Laud (1573-1645), archbishop of Canterbury, 1633-45.

The above-mentioned individuals had been sentenced to undergo their various modes of ignominy, for the space of one hour at noonday. But among the crowd were several whose punishment would be life-long; some, whose ears had been cropped, like those of puppy dogs; others, whose cheeks had been branded with the initials of their misdemeanors; one, with his nostrils slit and seared; and another, with a halter about his neck, which he was forbidden ever to take off, or to conceal beneath his garments. Methinks he must have been grievously tempted to affix the other end of the rope to some convenient beam or bough. There was likewise a young woman, with no mean share of beauty, whose doom it was to wear the letter A on the breast of her gown, in the eyes of all the world and her own children. And even her own children knew what that initial signified. Sporting with her infamy, the lost and desperate creature had embroidered the fatal token in scarlet cloth, with golden thread and the nicest art of needlework; so that the capital A might have been thought to mean Admirable, or anything rather than Adulteress.

Let not the reader argue, from any of these evidences of iniquity, that the times of the Puritans were more vicious than our own, when, as we pass along the very street of this sketch, we discern no badge of infamy on man or woman. It was the policy of our ancestors to search out even the most secret sins, and expose them to shame, without fear or favor, in the broadest light of the noon-day sun. Were such the custom now, perchance we might find materials for a no less piquant sketch than the above.

Except the malefactors whom we have described, and the diseased or infirm persons, the whole male population of the town, between sixteen years and sixty, were seen in the ranks of the trainband. A few stately savages, in all the pomp and dignity of the primeval Indian, stood gazing at the spectacle. Their flint-headed arrows were but childish weapons compared with the matchlocks of the Puritans, and would have rattled harmlessly against the steel caps and hammered iron breastplates which inclosed each soldier in an individual fortress. The valiant John Endicott glanced with an eye of pride at his sturdy followers, and prepared to renew the martial toils of the day.

"Come, my stout hearts!" quoth he, drawing his sword. "Let us show these poor heathen that we can handle our weapons like men of might. Well for them, if they put us not to prove it in earnest!"

The iron-breasted company straightened their line, and each man drew the heavy butt of his matchlock close to his left foot, thus awaiting the orders of the captain. But, as Endicott glanced right and left along the front, he discovered a personage at some little distance with whom it behooved him to hold a parley. It was an elderly gentleman, wearing a black cloak and band, and a high-crowned hat, beneath which was a velvet skull-cap, the whole being the garb of a Puritan minister. This reverend person bore a staff which seemed to have been recently cut in the forest, and his shoes were bermired as if he had been travelling on foot through the swamps of the wilderness. His aspect was perfectly that of a pilgrim, heightened also by an apostolic dignity. Just as

10. letter A—*The Scarlet Letter* made further use of this token. Cf. Alice Morse Earle, *Curious Punishments of Bygone Days*, Stone, 1896, Chap. VII, for the requirement that lawbreakers wear letters. 18. badge of infamy—Cf. "The Minister's Black Veil."

Endicott perceived him, he laid aside his staff, and stooped to drink at a bubbling fountain which gushed into the sunshine about a score of yards from the corner of the meeting-house. But, ere the good man drank, he turned his face heavenward in thankfulness, and then, holding back his gray beard with

5 one hand, he scooped up his simple draught in the hollow of the other.

"What, ho! good Mr. Williams," shouted Endicott. "You are welcome back again to our town of peace. How does our worthy Governor Winthrop? And what news from Boston?"

"The Governor hath his health, worshipful Sir," answered Roger Williams, 10 now resuming his staff, and drawing near. "And for the news, here is a letter, which, knowing I was to travel hitherward to-day, his Excellency committed to my charge. Belike it contains tidings of much import; for a ship arrived yesterday from England."

Mr. Williams, the minister of Salem and of course known to all the specta- 15 tors, had now reached the spot where Endicott was standing under the banner of his company, and put the Governor's epistle into his hand. The broad seal was impressed with Winthrop's coat of arms. Endicott hastily unclosed the letter and began to read, while, as his eye passed down the page, a wrathful change came over his manly countenance. The blood glowed through it, till it 20 seemed to be kindling with an internal heat; nor was it unnatural to suppose that his breastplate would likewise become red-hot with the angry fire of the bosom which it covered. Arriving at the conclusion, he shook the letter fiercely in his hand, so that it rustled as loud as the flag above his head.

"Black tidings these, Mr. Williams," said he; "blacker never came to New 25 England. Doubtless you know their purport?"

"Yea, truly," replied Roger Williams; "for the Governor consulted, respecting this matter, with my brethren in the ministry at Boston; and my opinion was likewise asked. And his Excellency entreats you by me, that the news be not suddenly noised abroad, lest the people be stirred up unto some outbreak, and 30 thereby give the King and the Archbishop a handle against us."

"The Governor is a wise man—a wise man, and a meek and moderate," said Endicott, setting his teeth grimly. "Nevertheless, I must do according to my own best judgment. There is neither man, woman, nor child in New England, but has a concern as dear as life in these tidings; and if John Endicott's voice 35 be loud enough, man, woman, and child shall hear them. Soldiers, wheel into a hollow square! Ho, good people! Here are news for one and all of you."

The soldiers closed in around their captain; and he and Roger Williams stood together under the banner of the Red Cross; while the women and the aged men pressed forward, and the mothers held up their children to look 40 Endicott in the face. A few taps of the drum gave signal for silence and attention.

"Fellow-soldiers,—fellow-exiles," began Endicott, speaking under strong excitement, yet powerfully restraining it, "wherefore did ye leave your native country? Wherefore, I say, have we left the green and fertile fields, the cot- 45 tages, or, perchance, the old gray halls, where we were born and bred, the

7. Winthrop—John Winthrop (1587-1649), governor of Massachusetts Bay in 1629 and thereafter. 9. Roger Williams—(1604-1683) banished to Rhode Island by the Puritans in 1636.

churchyards where our forefathers lie buried? Wherefore have we come hither to set up our own tombstones in a wilderness? A howling wilderness it is! The wolf and the bear meet us within halloo of our dwellings. The savage lieth in wait for us in the dismal shadow of the woods. The stubborn roots of the trees break our ploughshares, when we would till the earth. Our children cry for bread, and we must dig in the sands of the sea-shore to satisfy them. Wherefore, I say again, have we sought this country of a rugged soil and wintry sky? Was it not for the enjoyment of our civil rights? Was it not for liberty to worship God according to our conscience?"

"Call you this liberty of conscience?" interrupted a voice on the steps of the meeting-house.

It was the Wanton Gospeller. A sad and quiet smile flitted across the mild visage of Roger Williams. But Endicott, in the excitement of the moment, shook his sword wrathfully at the culprit—an ominous gesture from a man like him.

"What hast thou to do with conscience, thou knave?" cried he. "I said liberty to worship God, not license to profane and ridicule him. Break not in upon my speech, or I will lay thee neck and heels till this time to-morrow! Harken to me, friends, nor heed that accursed rhapsodist. As I was saying, we have sacrificed all things, and have come to a land whereof the old world hath scarcely heard, that we might make a new world unto ourselves, and painfully seek a path from hence to heaven. But what think ye now? This son of a Scotch tyrant—this grandson of a Papistical and adulterous Scotch woman, whose death proved that a golden crown doth not always save an anointed head from the block"—

"Nay, brother, nay," interposed Mr. Williams; "thy words are not meet for a secret chamber, far less for a public street."

"Hold thy peace, Roger Williams!" answered Endicott, imperiously. "My spirit is wiser than thine, for the business now in hand. I tell ye, fellow-exiles, that Charles of England, and Laud, our bitterest persecutor, arch-priest of Canterbury, are resolute to pursue us even hither. They are taking counsel, saith this letter, to send over a governor-general, in whose breast shall be deposited all the law and equity of the land. They are minded, also, to establish the idolatrous forms of English Episcopacy; so that, when Laud shall kiss the Pope's toe, as cardinal of Rome, he may deliver New England, bound hand and foot, into the power of his master!"

A deep groan from the auditors,—a sound of wrath, as well as fear and sorrow,—responded to this intelligence.

"Look ye to it, brethren," resumed Endicott, with increasing energy. "If this king and this arch-prelate have their will, we shall briefly behold a cross on the spire of this tabernacle which we have builded, and a high altar within its walls, with wax tapers burning round it at noonday. We shall hear the sacring bell, and the voices of the Romish priests saying the mass. But think ye, Christian men, that these abominations may be suffered without a sword drawn? without a shot fired? without blood spilt, yea, on the very stairs of the pulpit?"

19. rhapsodist—religious enthusiast. 23. Scotch tyrant—James I of England. 23. Scotch woman—Mary, Queen of Scots. 40. briefly—immediately.



No,—be ye strong of hand and stout of heart! Here we stand on our own soil, which we have bought with our goods, which we have won with our swords, which we have cleared with our axes, which we have tilled with the sweat of our brows, which we have sanctified with our prayers to the God that brought  
 5 us hither! Who shall enslave us here? What have we to do with this mitred prelate,—with this crowned king? What have we to do with England?”

Endicott gazed round at the excited countenances of the people, now full of his own spirit, and then turned suddenly to the standard-bearer, who stood close behind him.

10 “Officer, lower your banner!” said he.

The officer obeyed; and, brandishing his sword, Endicott thrust it through the cloth, and, with his left hand, rent the Red Cross completely out of the banner. He then waved the tattered ensign above his head.

15 “Sacriligious wretch!” cried the high-churchman in the pillory, unable longer to restrain himself, “thou hast rejected the symbol of our holy religion!”

“Treason, treason!” roared the royalist in the stocks. “He hath defaced the King’s banner!”

20 “Before God and man, I will avouch the deed,” answered Endicott. “Beat a flourish, drummer!—shout, soldiers and people!—in honor of the ensign of New England. Neither Pope nor Tyrant hath part in it now!”

With a cry of triumph, the people gave their sanction to one of the boldest exploits which our history records. And forever honored be the name of Endicott! We look back through the mist of ages, and recognize in the rending of the Red Cross from New England’s banner the first omen of that deliverance  
 25 which our fathers consummated after the bones of the stern Puritan had lain more than a century in the dust.

## RAPPACCINI’S DAUGHTER

“Rappaccini’s Daughter” was published in the *Democratic Review*, December, 1844, and collected into *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846). The following half-parenthetical note Hawthorne prefixed to this tale employs a device similar to Irving’s disguise as Diedrich Knickerbocker. Though Aubépine exists only in Hawthorne’s mind, the note may be read for the light it throws on Hawthorne’s position with reference to the transcendentalists. It will be observed that as part of the joke Hawthorne has translated into French his own name as well as the titles of a number of his stories.

### From *The Writings of Aubépine*

We do not remember to have seen any translated specimens of the productions of M. de l’Aubépine,—a fact the less to be wondered at, as his very name is unknown to many of his own countrymen as well as to the student of foreign literature. As a writer, he seems to occupy an unfortunate position between the Transcendentalists (who, under one name or another, have their share in all the current literature of the world) and the great body of pen-and-ink men who address the intellect and sympathies of the multitude. If not too refined, at all events too remote, too shadowy and unsubstantial in his modes of development, to suit the taste of the latter class, and yet too popular to satisfy the spiritual or metaphysical

requisitions of the former, he must necessarily find himself without an audience, except here and there an individual or possibly an isolated clique. His writings, to do them justice, are not altogether destitute of fancy and originality; they might have won him greater reputation but for an inveterate love of allegory, which is apt to invest his plots and characters with the aspect of scenery and people in the clouds, and to steal away the human warmth out of his conceptions. His fictions are sometimes historical, sometimes of the present day, and sometimes, so far as can be discovered, have little or no reference either to time or space. In any case, he generally contents himself with a very slight embroidery of outward manners,—the faintest possible counterfeit of real life,—and endeavors to create an interest by some less obvious peculiarity of the subject. Occasionally a breath of Nature, a raindrop of pathos and tenderness, or a gleam of humor, will find its way into the midst of his fantastic imagery, and make us feel as if, after all, we were yet within the limits of our native earth. We will only add to this very cursory notice that M. de l'Aubépine's productions, if the reader chance to take them in precisely the proper point of view, may amuse a leisure hour as well as those of a brighter man; if otherwise, they can hardly fail to look excessively like nonsense.

Our author is voluminous; he continues to write and publish with as much praiseworthy and indefatigable prolixity as if his efforts were crowned with the brilliant success that so justly attends those of Eugene Sue. His first appearance was by a collection of stories in a long series of volumes entitled "Contes deux fois racontés." The titles of some of his more recent works (we quote from memory) are as follows: "Le Voyage Céleste à Chemin de Fer," 3 tom., 1838; "Le nouveau Père Adam et la nouvelle Mère Eve," 2 tom., 1839; "Roderic; ou le Serpent à l'estomac," 2 tom., 1840; "Le Culte du Feu," a folio volume of ponderous research into the religion and ritual of the old Persian Ghebers, published in 1841; "La Soirée du Chateau en Espagne," 1 tom., 8vo, 1842; and "L'Artiste du Beau; ou le Papillon Mécanique," 5 tom., 4to, 1843. Our somewhat wearisome perusal of this startling catalogue of volumes has left behind it a certain personal affection and sympathy, though by no means admiration, for M. de l'Aubépine; and we would fain do the little in our power towards introducing him favorably to the American public. The ensuing tale is a translation of his "Beatrice; ou la Belle Empoisonneuse," recently published in *La Revue Anti-Aristocratique*. This journal, edited by the Comte de Bearhaven, has for some years past led the defence of liberal principles and popular rights with a faithfulness and ability worthy of all praise.

A YOUNG man, named Giovanni Guasconti, came, very long ago, from the more southern region of Italy, to pursue his studies at the University of Padua. Giovanni, who had but a scanty supply of gold ducats in his pocket, took lodgings in a high and gloomy chamber of an old edifice which looked not unworthy to have been the palace of a Paduan noble, and which, in fact, exhibited over its entrance the armorial bearings of a family long since extinct. The young stranger, who was not unstudied in the great poem of his country, recollected that one of the ancestors of this family, and perhaps an occupant of this very mansion, had been pictured by Dante as a partaker of the immortal agonies of his Inferno. These reminiscences and associations, together with the tendency to heartbreak natural to a young man for the first time out of his native sphere, caused Giovanni to sigh heavily as he looked around the desolate and ill-furnished apartment.

"Holy Virgin, signor!" cried old Dame Lisabetta, who, won by the youth's

remarkable beauty of person, was kindly endeavoring to give the chamber a habitable air, "what a sigh was that to come out of a young man's heart! Do you find this old mansion gloomy? For the love of Heaven, then, put your head out of the window, and you will see as bright sunshine as you have left in

5 Naples."

Guasconti mechanically did as the old woman advised, but could not quite agree with her that the Paduan sunshine was as cheerful as that of southern Italy. Such as it was, however, it fell upon a garden beneath the window, and expended its fostering influences on a variety of plants, which seemed to have  
10 been cultivated with exceeding care.

"Does this garden belong to the house?" asked Giovanni.

"Heaven forbid, signor, unless it were fruitful of better pot herbs than any that grow there now," answered old Lisabetta. "No; that garden is cultivated by the own hands of Signor Giacomo Rappaccini, the famous doctor, who, I  
15 warrant him, has been heard of as far as Naples. It is said that he distills these plants into medicines that are as potent as a charm. Oftentimes you may see the signor doctor at work, and perchance the signora, his daughter, too, gathering the strange flowers that grow in the garden."

The old woman had now done what she could for the aspect of the chamber; and, commending the young man to the protection of the saints, took her  
20 departure.

Giovanni still found no better occupation than to look down into the garden beneath his window. From its appearance, he judged it to be one of those botanic gardens which were of earlier date in Padua than elsewhere in Italy,  
25 or in the world. Or, not improbably, it might once have been the pleasure-place of an opulent family; for there was the ruin of a marble fountain in the centre, sculptured with rare art, but so wofully shattered that it was impossible to trace the original design from the chaos of remaining fragments. The water, however, continued to gush and sparkle into the sunbeams as cheerfully as  
30 ever. A little gurgling sound ascended to the young man's window, and made him feel as if a fountain were an immortal spirit that sung its song unceasingly and without heeding the vicissitudes around it, while one century embodied it in marble and another scattered the perishable garniture on the soil. All about the pool into which the water subsided grew various plants, that seemed to  
35 require a plentiful supply of moisture for the nourishment of gigantic leaves, and, in some instances, flowers gorgeously magnificent. There was one shrub in particular, set in a marble vase in the midst of the pool, that bore a profusion of purple blossoms, each of which had the luster and richness of a gem; and the whole together made a show so resplendent that it seemed enough to illuminate  
40 the garden, even had there been no sunshine. Every portion of the soil was peopled with plants and herbs, which, if less beautiful, still bore tokens of assiduous care, as if all had their individual virtues, known to the scientific mind that fostered them. Some were placed in urns, rich with old carving and others in common garden pots; some crept serpent-like along the ground or  
45 climbed on high, using whatever means of ascent was offered them. One plant had wreathed itself round a statue of Vertumnus, which was thus quite veiled

46. Vertumnus—Roman god of the changing seasons.

and shrouded in a drapery of hanging foliage, so happily arranged that it might have served a sculptor for a study.

While Giovanni stood at the window he heard a rustling behind a screen of leaves, and became aware that a person was at work in the garden. His figure soon emerged into view, and showed itself to be that of no common laborer, but a tall, emaciated, sallow, and sickly-looking man dressed in a scholar's garb of black. He was beyond the middle term of life, with gray hair, a thin, gray beard, and a face singularly marked with intellect and cultivation, but which could never, even in his more youthful days, have expressed much warmth of heart.

Nothing could exceed the intentness with which this scientific gardener examined every shrub which grew in his path: it seemed as if he was looking into their inmost nature, making observations in regard to their creative essence, and discovering why one leaf grew in this shape and another in that, and wherefore such and such flowers differed among themselves in hue and perfume. Nevertheless, in spite of this deep intelligence on his part, there was no approach to intimacy between himself and these vegetable existences. On the contrary, he avoided their actual touch or the direct inhaling of their odors with a caution that impressed Giovanni most disagreeably; for the man's demeanor was that of one walking among malignant influences, such as savage beasts, or deadly snakes, or evil spirits, which, should he allow them one moment of license, would wreak upon him some terrible fatality. It was strangely frightful to the young man's imagination to see this air of insecurity in a person cultivating a garden, that most simple and innocent of human toils, and which had been alike the joy and labor of the unfallen parents of the race. Was this garden, then, the Eden of the present world? and this man, with such a perception of harm in what his own hands caused to grow,—was he the Adam?

The distrustful gardener, while plucking away the dead leaves or pruning the too luxuriant growth of the shrubs, defended his hands with a pair of thick gloves. Nor were these his only armor. When, in his walk through the garden, he came to the magnificent plant that hung its purple gems beside the marble fountain, he placed a kind of mask over his mouth and nostrils, as if all this beauty did but conceal a deadlier malice; but, finding his task still too dangerous, he drew back, removed the mask, and called loudly, but in the infirm voice of a person affected with inward disease.

"Beatrice! Beatrice!"

"Here am I, my father. What would you?" cried a rich and youthful voice from the window of the opposite house—a voice as rich as a tropical sunset, and which made Giovanni, though he knew not why, think of deep hues of purple or crimson and of perfumes heavily delectable. "Are you in the garden?"

"Yes, Beatrice," answered the gardener, "and I need your help."

Soon there emerged from under a sculptured portal the figure of a young girl, arrayed with as much richness of taste as the most splendid of the flowers, beautiful as the day, and with a bloom so deep and vivid that one shade more would have been too much. She looked redundant with life, health, and energy; all of which attributes were bound down and compressed, as it were, and gir-

dled tensely, in their luxuriance, by her virgin zone. Yet Giovanni's fancy must have grown morbid while he looked down into the garden; for the impression which the fair stranger made upon him was as if here were another flower, the human sister of those vegetable ones, as beautiful as they, more beautiful  
5 than the richest of them, but still to be touched only with a glove, nor to be approached without a mask. As Beatrice came down the garden path, it was observable that she handled and inhaled the odor of several of the plants which her father had most sedulously avoided.

"Here, Beatrice," said the latter, "see how many needful offices require to be  
10 done to our chief treasure. Yet, shattered as I am, my life might pay the penalty of approaching it so closely as circumstances demand. Henceforth, I fear, this plant must be consigned to your sole charge."

"And gladly will I undertake it," cried again the rich tones of the young lady, as she bent toward the magnificent plant and opened her arms as if to  
15 embrace it. "Yes, my sister, my splendor, it shall be Beatrice's task to nurse and serve thee; and thou shalt reward her with thy kisses and perfumed breath, which to her is as the breath of life."

Then, with all the tenderness in her manner that was so strikingly expressed in her words, she busied herself with such attentions as the plant seemed to  
20 require; and Giovanni, at his lofty window, rubbed his eyes and almost doubted whether it were a girl tending her favorite flower, or one sister performing the duties of affection to another.

The scene soon terminated. Whether Dr. Rappaccini had finished his labors in the garden or that his watchful eye had caught the stranger's face, he now  
25 took his daughter's arm and retired. Night was already closing in; oppressive exhalations seemed to proceed from the plants and steal upward past the open window; and Giovanni, closing the lattice, went to his couch and dreamed of a rich flower and beautiful girl. Flower and maiden were different, and yet the same, and fraught with some strange peril in either shape.

But there is an influence in the light of morning that tends to rectify whatever errors of fancy, or even of judgment, we may have incurred during the sun's decline, or among the shadows of the night, or in the less wholesome glow of moonshine. Giovanni's first movement, on starting from sleep, was to throw open the window and gaze down into the garden which his dreams had made  
30 so fertile of mysteries. He was surprised and a little ashamed to find how real and matter-of-fact an affair it proved to be, in the first rays of the sun which gilded the dew-drops that hung upon leaf and blossom, and, while giving a brighter beauty to each rare flower, brought everything within the limits of ordinary experience. The young man rejoiced that, in the heart of  
40 the barren city, he had the privilege of overlooking this spot of lovely and luxuriant vegetation. It would serve, he said to himself, as a symbolic language to keep him in communion with Nature. Neither the sickly and thought-worn Dr. Giacomo Rappaccini, it is true, nor his brilliant daughter, were now visible; so that Giovanni could not determine how much of the singularity  
45 which he attributed to both was due to their own qualities and how much to his wonder-working fancy; but he was inclined to take a most rational view of the whole matter.

In the course of the day he paid his respects to Signor Pietro Baglioni, professor of medicine in the university, a physician of eminent repute, to whom Giovanni had brought a letter of introduction. The professor was an elderly personage, apparently of genial nature, and habits that might almost be called jovial. He kept the young man to dinner, and made himself very agreeable by the freedom and liveliness of his conversation, especially when warmed by a flask or two of Tuscan wine. Giovanni, conceiving that men of science, inhabitants of the same city, must needs be on familiar terms with one another, took an opportunity to mention the name of Dr. Rappaccini. But the professor did not respond with so much cordiality as he had anticipated.

"Ill would it become a teacher of the divine art of medicine," said Professor Pietro Baglioni, in answer to a question of Giovanni, "to withhold due and well-considered praise of a physician so eminently skilled as Rappaccini; but, on the other hand, I should answer it but scantily to my conscience were I to permit a worthy youth like yourself, Signor Giovanni, the son of an ancient friend, to imbibe erroneous ideas respecting a man who might hereafter chance to hold your life and death in his hands. The truth is, our worshipful Dr. Rappaccini has as much science as any member of the faculty—with perhaps one single exception—in Padua, or all Italy; but there are certain grave objections to his professional character."

"And what are they?" asked the young man.

"Has my friend Giovanni any disease of body or heart, that he is so inquisitive about physicians?" said the professor, with a smile. "But as for Rappaccini, it is said of him—and I, who know the man well, can answer for its truth—that he cares infinitely more for science than for mankind. His patients are interesting to him only as subjects for some new experiment. He would sacrifice human life, his own among the rest, or whatever else was dearest to him, for the sake of adding so much as a grain of mustard seed to the great heap of his accumulated knowledge."

"Methinks he is an awful man indeed," remarked Guasconti, mentally recalling the cold and purely intellectual aspect of Rappaccini. "And yet, worshipful professor, is it not a noble spirit? Are there many men capable of so spiritual a love of science?"

"God forbid," answered the professor, somewhat testily; "at least, unless they take sounder views of the healing art than those adopted by Rappaccini. It is his theory that all medicinal virtues are comprised within those substances which we term vegetable poisons. These he cultivates with his own hands, and is said even to have produced new varieties of poison, more horribly deleterious than Nature, without the assistance of this learned person, would ever have plagued the world withal. That the signor doctor does less mischief than might be expected with such dangerous substances is undeniable. Now and then, it must be owned, he has effected, or seemed to effect, a marvelous cure; but, to tell you my private mind, Signor Giovanni, he should receive little credit for such instances of success,—they being probably the work of chance,—but should be held strictly accountable for his failures, which may justly be considered his own work."

The youth might have taken Baglioni's opinions with many grains of allow-

ance had he known that there was a professional warfare of long continuance between him and Dr. Rappaccini, in which the latter was generally thought to have gained the advantage. If the reader be inclined to judge for himself, we refer him to certain black-letter tracts on both sides, preserved in the medical department of the University of Padua.

"I know not, most learned professor," returned Giovanni, after musing on what had been said of Rappaccini's exclusive zeal for science,—“I know not how dearly this physician may love his art; but surely there is one object more dear to him. He has a daughter.”

- 10 “Aha!” cried the professor, with a laugh. “So now our friend Giovanni's secret is out. You have heard of this daughter, whom all the young men in Padua are wild about, though not half a dozen have ever had the good hap to see her face. I know little of the Signora Beatrice save that Rappaccini is said to have instructed her deeply in his science, and that, young and beautiful as
- 15 fame reports her, she is already qualified to fill a professor's chair. Perchance her father destines her for mine! Other absurd rumors there be, not worth talking about or listening to. So now, Signor Giovanni, drink off your glass of lachryma.”

- Guasconti returned to his lodgings somewhat heated with the wine he had
- 20 quaffed, and which caused his brain to swim with strange fantasies in reference to Dr. Rappaccini and the beautiful Beatrice. On his way, happening to pass by a florist's he bought a fresh bouquet of flowers.

- Ascending to his chamber, he seated himself near the window, but within the shadow thrown by the depth of the wall, so that he could look down into
- 25 the garden with little risk of being discovered. All beneath his eye was a solitude. The strange plants were basking in the sunshine, and now and then nodding gently to one another, as if in acknowledgment of sympathy and kindred. In the midst, by the shattered fountain, grew the magnificent shrub, with its purple gems clustering all over it; they glowed in the air, and gleamed
- 30 back again out of the depths of the pool, which thus seemed to overflow with colored radiance from the rich reflection that was steeped in it. At first, as we have said, the garden was a solitude. Soon, however,—as Giovanni had half hoped, half feared, would be the case,—a figure appeared beneath the antique sculptured portal, and came down between the rows of plants, inhaling their
- 35 various perfumes as if she were one of those beings of old classic fables that lived upon sweet odors. On again beholding Beatrice the young man was even startled to perceive how much her beauty exceeded his recollection of it; so brilliant, so vivid, was its character, that she glowed amid the sunlight, and, as Giovanni whispered to himself, positively illuminated the more shadowy in-
- 40 tervals of the garden path. Her face being now more revealed than on the former occasion, he was struck by its expression of simplicity and sweetness,—qualities that had not entered into his idea of her character, and which made him ask anew what manner of mortal she might be. Nor did he fail again to observe, or imagine, an analogy between the beautiful girl and the gorgeous
- 45 shrub that hung its gemlike flowers over the fountain,—a resemblance which

4. **black-letter**—Old English style of fat type. 18. **lachryma**—lachryma Christi, a red Italian wine.

Beatrice seemed to have indulged a fantastic humor in heightening, both by the arrangement of her dress and the selection of its hues.

Approaching the shrub, she threw open her arms, as with a passionate ardor, and drew its branches into an intimate embrace—so intimate that her features were hidden in its leafy bosom and her glistening ringlets all intermingled with the flowers. 5

“Give me thy breath, my sister,” exclaimed Beatrice; “for I am faint with common air. And give me this flower of thine, which I separate with gentlest fingers from the stem and place it close beside my heart.”

With these words the beautiful daughter of Rappaccini plucked one of the richest blossoms of the shrub, and was about to fasten it in her bosom. But now, unless Giovanni's draughts of wine had bewildered his senses, a singular incident occurred. A small orange-colored reptile of the lizard or chameleon species, chanced to be creeping along the path just at the feet of Beatrice. It appeared to Giovanni,—but at the distance from which he gazed, he could scarcely have seen anything so minute,—it appeared to him, however, that a drop or two of moisture from the broken stem of the flower descended upon the lizard's head. For an instant the reptile contorted itself violently, and then lay motionless in the sunshine. Beatrice observed this remarkable phenomenon, and crossed herself, sadly, but without surprise; nor did she therefore hesitate to arrange the fatal flower in her bosom. There it blushed, and almost glimmered with the dazzling effect of a precious stone, adding to her dress and aspect the one appropriate charm which nothing else in the world could have supplied. But Giovanni, out of the shadow of his window, bent forward and shrank back, and murmured and trembled. 10 15 20 25

“Am I awake? Have I my senses?” said he to himself. “What is this being? Beautiful shall I call her, or inexpressibly terrible?”

Beatrice now strayed carelessly through the garden, approaching closer beneath Giovanni's window, so that he was compelled to thrust his head quite out of its concealment in order to gratify the intense and painful curiosity which she excited. At this moment there came a beautiful insect over the garden wall; it had, perhaps, wandered through the city and found no flowers or verdure among those antique haunts of men until the heavy perfumes of Dr. Rappaccini's shrubs had lured it from afar. Without alighting on the flowers, this winged brightness seemed to be attracted by Beatrice, and lingered in the air and fluttered about her head. Now, here it could not be but that Giovanni Guasconti's eyes deceived him. Be that as it might, he fancied that, while Beatrice was gazing at the insect with childish delight, it grew faint and fell at her feet; its bright wings shivered; it was dead—from no cause that he could discern, unless it were the atmosphere of her breath. Again Beatrice crossed herself and sighed heavily as she bent over the dead insect. 30 35 40

An impulsive movement of Giovanni drew her eyes to the window. There she beheld the beautiful head of the young man—rather a Grecian than an Italian head, with fair, regular features, and a glistening of gold among his ringlets—gazing down upon her like a being that hovered in mid air. Scarcely knowing what he did, Giovanni threw down the bouquet which he had hitherto held in his hand. 45



"Signora," said he, "there are pure and healthful flowers. Wear them for the sake of Giovanni Guasconti."

"Thanks, signor," replied Beatrice, with her rich voice, that came forth as it were like a gush of music, and with a mirthful expression half childish and half woman-like. "I accept your gift, and would fain recompense it with this precious purple flower; but if I toss it into the air it will not reach you. So Signor Guasconti must even content himself with my thanks."

She lifted the bouquet from the ground, and then, as if inwardly ashamed at having stepped aside from her maidenly reserve to respond to a stranger's greeting, passed swiftly homeward through the garden. But few as the moments were, it seemed to Giovanni, when she was on the point of vanishing beneath the sculptured portal, that his beautiful bouquet was already beginning to wither in her grasp. It was an idle thought; there could be no possibility of distinguishing a faded flower from a fresh one at so great a distance.

For many days after this incident the young man avoided the window that looked into Dr. Rappaccini's garden, as if something ugly and monstrous would have blasted his eyesight had he been betrayed into a glance. He felt conscious of having put himself, to a certain extent, within the influence of an unintelligible power by the communication which he had opened with Beatrice. The wisest course would have been, if his heart were in any real danger, to quit his lodgings and Padua itself at once; the next wiser, to have accustomed himself, as far as possible, to the familiar and daylight view of Beatrice,—thus bringing her rigidly and systematically within the limits of ordinary experience. Least of all, while avoiding her sight, ought Giovanni to have remained so near this extraordinary being that the proximity and possibility even of intercourse should give a kind of substance and reality to the wild vagaries which his imagination ran riot continually in producing. Guasconti had not a deep heart—or, at all events, its depths were not sounded now; but he had a quick fancy, and an ardent southern temperament which rose every instant to a higher fever pitch. Whether or no Beatrice possessed those terrible attributes, that fatal breath, the affinity with those so beautiful and deadly flowers which were indicated by what Giovanni had witnessed, she had at least instilled a fierce and subtle poison into his system. It was not love, although her rich beauty was a madness to him; nor horror, even while he fancied her spirit to be imbued with the same baneful essence that seemed to pervade her physical frame; but a wild offspring of both love and horror that had each parent in it, and burned like one and shivered like the other. Giovanni knew not what to dread; still less did he know what to hope; yet hope and dread kept a continual warfare in his breast, alternately vanquishing one another and starting up afresh to renew the contest. Blessed are all simple emotions, be they dark or bright! It is the lurid intermixture of the two that produces the illuminating blaze of the infernal regions.

Sometimes he endeavored to assuage the fever of his spirit by a rapid walk through the streets of Padua or beyond its gates: his footsteps kept time with the throbings of his brain, so that the walk was apt to accelerate itself to a race. One day he found himself arrested; his arm was seized by a portly personage

who had turned back on recognizing the young man and expended much breath in overtaking him.

"Signor Giovanni! Stay, my young friend!" cried he. "Have you forgotten me? That might well be the case if I were as much altered as yourself."

It was Baglioni, whom Giovanni had avoided ever since their first meeting, from a doubt that the professor's sagacity would look too deeply into his secrets. Endeavoring to recover himself, he stared forth wildly from his inner world into the outer one and spoke like a man in a dream.

"Yes; I am Giovanni Guasconti. You are Professor Pietro Baglioni. Now let me pass!"

"Not yet, not yet, Signor Giovanni Guasconti," said the professor, smiling, but at the same time scrutinizing the youth with an earnest glance. "What! Did I grow up side by side with your father? and shall his son pass me like a stranger in these old streets of Padua? Stand still, Signor Giovanni; for we must have a word or two before we part."

"Speedily, then, most worshipful professor, speedily," said Giovanni, with feverish impatience. "Does not your worship see that I am in haste?"

Now, while he was speaking there came a man in black along the street, stooping and moving feebly like a person in inferior health. His face was all overspread with a most sickly and sallow hue, but yet so pervaded with an expression of piercing and active intellect that an observer might easily have overlooked the merely physical attributes and have seen only this wonderful energy. As he passed, this person exchanged a cold and distant salutation with Baglioni, but fixed his eyes upon Giovanni with an intentness that seemed to bring out whatever was within him worthy of notice. Nevertheless, there was a peculiar quietness in the look, as if taking merely a speculative, not a human, interest in the young man.

"It is Dr. Rappaccini!" whispered the professor, when the stranger had passed. "Has he ever seen your face before?"

"Not that I know," answered Giovanni, starting at the name.

"He *has* seen you! he must have seen you!" said Baglioni hastily. "For some purpose or other, this man of science is making a study of you. I know that look of his! It is the same that coldly illuminates his face as he bends over a bird, a mouse, or a butterfly, which, in pursuance of some experiment, he has killed by the perfume of a flower; a look as deep as Nature itself, but without Nature's warmth of love. Signor Giovanni, I will stake my life upon it, you are the subject of one of Rappaccini's experiments."

"Will you make a fool of me?" cried Giovanni passionately. "*That*, signor professor, were an untoward experiment."

"Patience, patience!" replied the imperturbable professor. "I tell thee, my poor Giovanni, that Rappaccini has a scientific interest in thee. Thou hast fallen into fearful hands! And the Signora Beatrice,—what part does she act in this mystery?"

But Guasconti, finding Baglioni's pertinacity intolerable, here broke away, and was gone before the professor could again seize his arm. He looked after the young man intently and shook his head.

"This must not be," said Baglioni to himself. "The youth is the son of my old friend, and shall not come to any harm from which the arcana of medical science can preserve him. Besides, it is too insufferable an impertinence in Rappaccini, thus to snatch the lad out of my own hands, as I may say, and  
 5 make use of him for his infernal experiments. This daughter of his! It shall be looked to. Perchance, most learned Rappaccini, I may foil you where you little dream of it!"

Meanwhile, Giovanni had pursued a circuitous route, and at length found himself at the door of his lodgings. As he crossed the threshold he was met by  
 10 old Lisabetta, who smirked and smiled, and was evidently desirous to attract his attention; vainly, however, as the ebullition of his feelings had momentarily subsided into a cold and dull vacancy. He turned his eyes full upon the withered face that was puckering itself into a smile, but seemed to behold it not. The old dame, therefore, laid her grasp upon his cloak.

15 "Signor! signor!" whispered she, still with a smile over the whole breadth of her visage, so that it looked not unlike a grotesque carving in wood, darkened by centuries. "Listen, signor! There is a private entrance into the garden!"

"What do you say?" exclaimed Giovanni, turning quickly about, as if an  
 20 inanimate thing should start into feverish life. "A private entrance into Dr. Rappaccini's garden?"

"Hush! hush! Not so loud!" whispered Lisabetta, putting her hand over his mouth. "Yes; into the worshipful doctor's garden, where you may see all his fine shrubbery. Many a young man in Padua would give gold to be admitted  
 25 among those flowers."

Giovanni put a piece of gold into her hand.

"Show me the way," said he.

A surmise, probably excited by his conversation with Baglioni, crossed his mind, that this interposition of old Lisabetta might perchance be connected  
 30 with the intrigue, whatever were its nature, in which the professor seemed to suppose that Dr. Rappaccini was involving him. But such a suspicion, though it disturbed Giovanni, was inadequate to restrain him. The instant that he was aware of the possibility of approaching Beatrice, it seemed an absolute necessity of his existence to do so. It mattered not whether she were angel  
 35 or demon; he was irrevocably within her sphere, and must obey the law that whirled him onward, in ever lessening circles, toward a result which he did not attempt to foreshadow; and yet, strange to say, there came across him a sudden doubt whether this intense interest on his part were not delusory; whether it were really of so deep and positive a nature as to justify him in now  
 40 thrusting himself into an incalculable position; whether it were not merely the fantasy of a young man's brain, only slightly or not at all connected with his heart.

He paused, hesitated, turned half about, but again went on. His withered guide led him along several obscure passages, and finally undid a door, through  
 45 which, as it was opened, there came the sight and sound of rustling leaves, with the broken sunshine glimmering among them. Giovanni stepped forth,

and, forcing himself through the entanglement of a shrub that wreathed its tendrils over the hidden entrance, stood beneath his own window in the open area of Dr. Rappaccini's garden.

How often is it the case that, when impossibilities have come to pass and dreams have condensed their misty substance into tangible realities, we find ourselves calm, and even coldly self-possessed, amid circumstances which it would have been a delirium of joy or agony to anticipate! Fate delights to thwart us thus. Passion will choose his own time to rush upon the scene, and lingers sluggishly behind when an appropriate adjustment of events would seem to summon his appearance. So was it now with Giovanni. Day after day his pulses had throbbed with feverish blood at the improbable idea of an interview with Beatrice, and of standing with her, face to face, in this very garden, basking in the Oriental sunshine of her beauty, and snatching from her full gaze the mystery which he deemed the riddle of his own existence. But now there was a singular and untimely equanimity within his breast. He threw a glance around the garden to discover if Beatrice or her father were present, and, perceiving that he was alone, began a critical observation of the plants. 5 10 15

The aspect of one and all of them dissatisfied him; their gorgeousness seemed fierce, passionate, and even unnatural. There was hardly an individual shrub which a wanderer, straying by himself through a forest, would not have been startled to find growing wild, as if an unearthly face had glared at him out of the thicket. Several also would have shocked a delicate instinct by an appearance of artificialness indicating that there had been such commixture, and, as it were, adultery, of various vegetable species, that the production was no longer of God's making, but the monstrous offspring of man's depraved fancy, glowing with only an evil mockery of beauty. They were probably the result of experiment, which in one or two cases had succeeded in mingling plants individually lovely into a compound possessing the questionable and ominous character that distinguished the whole growth of the garden. In fine, Giovanni recognized but two or three plants in the collection, and those of a kind that he well knew to be poisonous. While busy with these contemplations he heard the rustling of a silken garment, and, turning, beheld Beatrice emerging from beneath the sculptured portal. 20 25 30

Giovanni had not considered with himself what should be his deportment; whether he should apologize for his intrusion into the garden, or assume that he was there with the privity at least, if not by the desire, of Dr. Rappaccini or his daughter; but Beatrice's manner placed him at his ease, although leaving him still in doubt by what agency he had gained admittance. She came lightly along the path and met him near the broken fountain. There was surprise in her face, but brightened by a simple and kind expression of pleasure. 35 40

"You are a connoisseur in flowers, signor," said Beatrice, with a smile, alluding to the bouquet which he had flung her from the window. "It is no marvel, therefore, if the sight of my father's rare collection has tempted you to take a nearer view. If he were here, he could tell you many strange and interesting facts as to the nature and habits of these shrubs; for he has spent a lifetime in such studies, and this garden is his world." 45

"And yourself, lady," observed Giovanni, "if fame says true,—you likewise are deeply skilled in the virtues indicated by these rich blossoms and these spicy perfumes. Would you deign to be my instructress, I should prove an apter scholar than if taught by Signor Rappaccini himself."

- 5 "Are there such idle rumors?" asked Beatrice, with the music of a pleasant laugh. "Do people say that I am skilled in my father's science of plants? What a jest is there! No; though I have grown up among these flowers, I know no more of them than their hues and perfume; and sometimes methinks I would  
10 fain rid myself of even that small knowledge. There are many flowers here, and those not the least brilliant, that shock and offend me when they meet my eye. But pray, signor, do not believe these stories about my science. Believe nothing of me save what you see with your own eyes."

- "And must I believe all that I have seen with my own eyes?" asked Giovanni, pointedly, while the recollection of former scenes made him shrink. "No,  
15 signora; you demand too little of me. Bid me believe nothing save what comes from your own lips."

It would appear that Beatrice understood him. There came a deep flush to her cheek, but she looked full into Giovanni's eyes and responded to his gaze of uneasy suspicion with a queenlike haughtiness.

- 20 "I do so bid you, signor," she replied. "Forget whatever you may have fancied in regard to me. If true to the outward senses, still it may be false in its essence; but the words of Beatrice Rappaccini's lips are true from the depths of the heart outward. Those you may believe."

- A fervor glowed in her whole aspect and beamed upon Giovanni's consciousness like the light of truth itself; but while she spoke there was a fragrance  
25 in the atmosphere around her, rich and delightful, though evanescent, yet which the young man, from an indefinable reluctance, scarcely dared to draw into his lungs. It might be the odor of the flowers. Could it be Beatrice's breath which thus embalmed her words with a strange richness, as if by steeping them  
30 in her heart? A faintness passed like a shadow over Giovanni and flitted away; he seemed to gaze through the beautiful girl's eyes into her transparent soul, and felt no more doubt or fear.

- The tinge of passion that had colored Beatrice's manner vanished; she became gay, and appeared to derive a pure delight from her communion with the youth  
35 not unlike what the maiden of a lonely island might have felt conversing with a voyager from the civilized world. Evidently her experience of life had been confined within the limits of that garden. She talked now about matters as simple as the daylight or summer clouds, and now asked questions in reference to the city, or Giovanni's distant home, his friends, his mother, and his sisters—  
40 questions indicating such seclusion, and such lack of familiarity with modes and forms, that Giovanni responded as if to an infant. Her spirit gushed out before him like a fresh rill that was just catching its first glimpse of the sunlight and wondering at the reflections of earth and sky which were flung into its bosom. There came thoughts, too, from a deep source, and fantasies of gemlike brilli-  
45 ancy, as if diamonds and rubies sparkled upward among the bubbles of the fountain. Ever and anon there gleamed across the young man's mind a sense of wonder that he should be walking side by side with the being who had so

wrought upon his imagination, whom he had idealized in such hues of terror, in whom he had positively witnessed such manifestations of dreadful attributes,—that he should be conversing with Beatrice like a brother, and should find her so human and so maidenlike. But such reflections were only momentary; the effect of her character was too real not to make itself familiar at once.

In this free intercourse they had strayed through the garden, and now, after many turns among its avenues, were come to the shattered fountain, beside which grew the magnificent shrub with its treasury of glowing blossoms. A fragrance was diffused from it which Giovanni recognized as identical with that which he had attributed to Beatrice's breath, but incomparably more powerful. As her eyes fell upon it, Giovanni beheld her press her hand to her bosom, as if her heart were throbbing suddenly and painfully.

"For the first time in my life," murmured she, addressing the shrub, "I had forgotten thee."

"I remember, signora," said Giovanni, "that you once promised to reward me with one of these living gems for the bouquet which I had the happy boldness to fling to your feet. Permit me now to pluck it as a memorial of this interview."

He made a step toward the shrub with extended hand; but Beatrice darted forward, uttering a shriek that went through his heart like a dagger. She caught his hand and drew it back with the whole force of her slender figure. Giovanni felt her touch thrilling through his fibres.

"Touch it not!" exclaimed she, in a voice of agony. "Not for thy life! It is fatal!"

Then, hiding her face, she fled from him and vanished beneath the sculptured portal. As Giovanni followed her with his eyes, he beheld the emaciated figure and pale intelligence of Dr. Rappaccini, who had been watching the scene, he knew not how long, within the shadow of the entrance.

No sooner was Guasconti alone in his chamber than the image of Beatrice came back to his passionate musings, invested with all the witchery that had been gathering around it ever since his first glimpse of her, and now likewise imbued with a tender warmth of girlish womanhood. She was human; her nature was endowed with all gentle and feminine qualities; she was worthiest to be worshipped; she was capable, surely, on her part, of the height and heroism of love. Those tokens which he had hitherto considered as proofs of a frightful peculiarity in her physical and moral system were now either forgotten, or, by the subtle sophistry of passion transmuted into a golden crown of enchantment, rendering Beatrice the more admirable by so much as she was the more unique. Whatever had looked ugly was now beautiful; or, if incapable of such a change, it stole away and hid itself among those shapeless half ideas which throng the dim region beyond the daylight of our perfect consciousness.

Thus did he spend the night, nor fell asleep until the dawn had begun to awake the slumbering flowers in Dr. Rappaccini's garden, whither Giovanni's dreams doubtless led him. Up rose the sun in his due season, and, flinging his beams upon the young man's eyelids, awoke him to a sense of pain. When thoroughly aroused, he became sensible of a burning and tingling agony in

his hand—in his right hand—the very hand which Beatrice had grasped in her own when he was on the point of plucking one of the gemlike flowers. On the back of that hand there was now a purple print like that of four small fingers, and the likeness of a slender thumb upon his wrist.

- 5 Oh, how stubbornly does love,—or even that cunning semblance of love which flourishes in the imagination, but strikes no depth of root into the heart,—how stubbornly does it hold its faith until the moment comes when it is doomed to vanish into thin mist! Giovanni wrapped a handkerchief about his hand and wondered what evil thing had stung him, and soon forgot his pain in a reverie  
10 of Beatrice.

- After the first interview, a second was in the inevitable course of what we call fate. A third; a fourth; and a meeting with Beatrice in the garden was no longer an incident in Giovanni's daily life, but the whole space in which he might be said to live; for the anticipation and memory of that ecstatic hour  
15 made up the remainder. Nor was it otherwise with the daughter of Rappaccini. She watched for the youth's appearance, and flew to his side with confidence as unreserved as if they had been playmates from early infancy—as if they were such playmates still. If, by any unwonted chance, he failed to come at the appointed moment, she stood beneath the window and sent up the rich sweetness of her tones to float around him in his chamber and echo and reverberate  
20 throughout his heart: "Giovanni! Giovanni! Why tarriest thou? Come down!" and down he hastened into that Eden of poisonous flowers.

- But, with all this intimate familiarity, there was still a reserve in Beatrice's demeanor, so rigidly and invariably sustained that the idea of infringing it  
25 scarcely occurred to his imagination. By all appreciable signs, they loved; they had looked love with eyes that conveyed the holy secret from the depths of one soul into the depths of the other, as if it were too sacred to be whispered by the way; they had even spoken love in those gushes of passion when their spirits darted forth in articulated breath like tongues of long-hidden flame;  
30 and yet there had been no seal of lips, no clasp of hands, nor any slightest caress such as love claims and hallows. He had never touched one of the gleaming ringlets of her hair; her garment—so marked was the physical barrier between them—had never been waved against him by a breeze. On the few occasions when Giovanni had seemed tempted to overstep the limit, Beatrice  
35 grew so sad, so stern, and withal wore such a look of desolate separation, shuddering at itself, that not a spoken word was requisite to repel him. At such times he was startled at the horrible suspicions that rose, monster-like, out of the caverns of his heart and stared him in the face; his love grew thin and faint as the morning mist; his doubts alone had substance. But, when  
40 Beatrice's face brightened again after the momentary shadow, she was transformed at once from the mysterious, questionable being whom he had watched with so much awe and horror; she was now the beautiful and unsophisticated girl whom he felt that his spirit knew with a certainty beyond all other knowledge.

- 45 A considerable time had now passed since Giovanni's last meeting with Baglioni. One morning, however, he was disagreeably surprised by a visit from the professor, whom he had scarcely thought of for whole weeks, and would

willingly have forgotten still longer. Given up as he had long been to a pervading excitement, he could tolerate no companions except upon condition of their perfect sympathy with his present state of feeling. Such sympathy was not to be expected from Professor Baglioni.

The visitor chatted carelessly for a few moments about the gossip of the city and the university, and then took up another topic. 5

"I have been reading an old classic author lately," said he, "and met with a story that strangely interested me. Possibly you may remember it. It is of an Indian prince, who sent a beautiful woman as a present to Alexander the Great. She was as lovely as the dawn and gorgeous as the sunset; but what especially distinguished her was a certain rich perfume in her breath—richer than a garden of Persian roses. Alexander, as was natural to a youthful conqueror, fell in love at first sight with this magnificent stranger; but a certain sage physician, happening to be present, discovered a terrible secret in regard to her." 10 15

"And what was that?" asked Giovanni, turning his eyes downward to avoid those of the professor.

"That this lovely woman," continued Baglioni, with emphasis, "had been nourished with poisons from her birth upward, until her whole nature was so imbued with them that she herself had become the deadliest poison in existence. Poison was her element of life. With that rich perfume of her breath she blasted the very air. Her love would have been poison—her embrace death. Is not this a marvelous tale?" 20

"A childish fable," answered Giovanni, nervously starting from his chair. "I marvel how your worship finds time to read such nonsense among your graver studies." 25

"By the by," said the professor, looking uneasily about him, "what singular fragrance is this in your apartment? Is it the perfume of your gloves? It is faint, but delicious; and yet, after all, by no means agreeable. Were I to breathe it long, methinks it would make me ill. It is like the breath of a flower; but I see no flowers in the chamber." 30

"Nor are there any," replied Giovanni, who had turned pale as the professor spoke; "nor, I think, is there any fragrance except in your worship's imagination. Odors being a sort of element combined of the sensual and the spiritual, are apt to deceive us in this manner. The recollection of a perfume, the bare idea of it, may easily be mistaken for a present reality." 35

"Ay; but my sober imagination does not often play such tricks," said Baglioni; "and, were I to fancy any kind of odor, it would be that of some vile apothecary drug wherewith my fingers are likely enough to be imbued. Our worshipful friend Rappaccini, as I have heard, tinctures his medicaments with odors richer than those of Araby. Doubtless, likewise, the fair and learned Signora Beatrice would minister to her patients with draughts as sweet as a maiden's breath; but woe to him that sips them!" 40

Giovanni's face evinced many contending emotions. The tone in which the professor alluded to the pure and lovely daughter of Rappaccini was a torture to his soul; and yet the intimation of a view of her character, opposite to his own, gave instantaneous distinctness to a thousand dim suspicions, which now 45



grinned at him like so many demons. But he strove hard to quell them and to respond to Baglioni with a true lover's perfect faith.

"Signor professor," said he, "you were my father's friend; perchance, too, it is your purpose to act a friendly part toward his son. I would fain feel  
5 nothing toward you save respect and deference; but I pray you to observe, signor, that there is one subject on which we must not speak. You know not the Signora Beatrice. You cannot, therefore, estimate the wrong—the blasphemy, I may even say—that is offered to her character by a light or injurious word."

"Giovanni! my poor Giovanni!" answered the professor, with a calm  
10 expression of pity, "I know this wretched girl far better than yourself. You shall hear the truth in respect to the poisoner Rappaccini and his poisonous daughter; yes, poisonous as she is beautiful. Listen; for, even should you do violence to my gray hairs, it shall not silence me. That old fable of the Indian woman has become a truth by the deep and deadly science of Rappaccini and  
15 in the person of the lovely Beatrice."

Giovanni groaned and hid his face.

"Her father," continued Baglioni, "was not restrained by natural affection from offering up his child in this horrible manner as the victim of his insane zeal for science; for, let us do him justice, he is as true a man of science as ever  
20 distilled his own heart in an alembic. What, then, will be your fate? Beyond a doubt you are selected as the material of some new experiment. Perhaps the result is to be death; perhaps a fate more awful still. Rappaccini, with what he calls the interest of science before his eyes, will hesitate at nothing."

"It is a dream," muttered Giovanni to himself; "surely it is a dream."

"But," resumed the professor, "be of good cheer, son of my friend. It is not yet too late for the rescue. Possibly we may even succeed in bringing back this miserable child within the limits of ordinary nature, from which her father's madness has estranged her. Behold this little silver vase! It was wrought by the hands of the renowned Benvenuto Cellini, and is well worthy to be a love gift  
30 to the fairest dame in Italy. But its contents are invaluable. One little sip of this antidote would have rendered the most virulent poisons of the Borgias innocuous. Doubt not that it will be as efficacious against those of Rappaccini. Bestow the vase, and the precious liquid within it, on your Beatrice, and hopefully await the result."

35 Baglioni laid a small, exquisitely wrought silver vial on the table and withdrew, leaving what he had said to produce its effect upon the young man's mind.

"We will thwart Rappaccini yet," thought he, chuckling to himself, as he descended the stairs; "but, let us confess the truth of him, he is a wonderful man  
40 —a wonderful man indeed; a vile empiric, however, in his practice, and therefore not to be tolerated by those who respect the good old rules of the medical profession."

Throughout Giovanni's whole acquaintance with Beatrice, he had occasion-

29. **Benvenuto Cellini**—(1500-1571) famous Italian worker in gold and silver. 31. **Borgias**—Rodrigo Borgia (1431-1503), Italian prelate, and his daughter Lucrezia gained notoriety for poisoning their enemies. 40. **empiric**—one who bases his knowledge not on theory, but experiment.

ally, as we have said, been haunted by dark surmises as to her character; yet so thoroughly had she made herself felt by him as a simple, natural, most affectionate, and guileless creature, that the image now held up by Professor Baglioni looked as strange and incredible as if it were not in accordance with his own original conception. True, there were ugly recollections connected with his first glimpses of the beautiful girl; he could not quite forget the bouquet that withered in her grasp, and the insect that perished amid the sunny air, by no ostensible agency save the fragrance of her breath. These incidents, however, dissolving in the pure light of her character, had no longer the efficacy of facts, but were acknowledged as mistaken fantasies, by whatever testimony of the senses they might appear to be substantiated. There is something truer and more real than what we can see with the eyes and touch with the finger. On such better evidence had Giovanni founded his confidence in Beatrice, though rather by the necessary force of her high attributes than by any deep and generous faith on his part. But now his spirit was incapable of sustaining itself at the height to which the early enthusiasm of passion had exalted it; he fell down, groveling among earthly doubts, and defiled therewith the pure whiteness of Beatrice's image. Not that he gave her up; he did but distrust. He resolved to institute some decisive test that should satisfy him, once for all, whether there were those dreadful peculiarities in her physical nature which could not be supposed to exist without some corresponding monstrosity of soul. His eyes, gazing down afar, might have deceived him as to the lizard, the insect, and the flowers; but if he could witness, at the distance of a few paces, the sudden blight of one fresh and healthful flower in Beatrice's hand, there would be room for no further question. With this idea he hastened to the florist's and purchased a bouquet that was still gemmed with the morning dew-drops.

It was now the customary hour of his daily interview with Beatrice. Before descending into the garden, Giovanni failed not to look at his figure in the mirror,—a vanity to be expected in a beautiful young man, yet, as displaying itself at that troubled and feverish moment, the token of a certain shallowness of feeling and insincerity of character. He did gaze, however, and said to himself that his features had never before possessed so rich a grace, nor his eyes such vivacity, nor his cheeks so warm a hue of superabundant life.

"At least," thought he, "her poison has not yet insinuated itself into my system. I am no flower to perish in her grasp."

With that thought he turned his eyes on the bouquet, which he had never once laid aside from his hand. A thrill of indefinable horror shot through his frame on perceiving that those dewy flowers were already beginning to droop; they wore the aspect of things that had been fresh and lovely yesterday. Giovanni grew white as marble, and stood motionless before the mirror, staring at his own reflection there as at the likeness of something frightful. He remembered Baglioni's remark about the fragrance that seemed to pervade the chamber. It must have been the poison in his breath! Then he shuddered—shuddered at himself. Recovering from his stupor, he began to watch with curious eye a spider that was busily at work hanging its web from the antique cornice of the apartment, crossing and recrossing the artful system of interwoven lines—as vigorous and active a spider as ever dangled from an old ceil-

ing. Giovanni bent toward the insect, and emitted a deep, long breath. The spider suddenly ceased its toil; the web vibrated with a tremor originating in the body of the small artisan. Again Giovanni sent forth a breath, deeper, longer, and imbued with a venomous feeling out of his heart; he knew not  
5 whether he were wicked or only desperate. The spider made a convulsive gripe with his limbs and hung dead across the window.

"Accursed! accursed!" muttered Giovanni, addressing himself. "Hast thou grown so poisonous that this deadly insect perishes by thy breath?"

At that moment a rich, sweet voice came floating up from the garden.

10 "Giovanni! Giovanni! It is past the hour! Why tarriest thou? Come down!"

"Yes," muttered Giovanni again. "She is the only being whom my breath may not slay! Would that it might!"

He rushed down, and in an instant was standing before the bright and  
15 loving eyes of Beatrice. A moment ago his wrath and despair had been so fierce that he could have desired nothing so much as to wither her by a glance; but with her actual presence there came influences which had too real an existence to be at once shaken off: recollections of the delicate and benign power of her feminine nature, which had so often enveloped him in a religious calm; recollec-  
20 tions of many a holy and passionate outgush of her heart, when the pure fountain had been unsealed from its depths and made visible in its transparency to his mental eye; recollections which, had Giovanni known how to estimate them, would have assured him that all this ugly mystery was but an earthly illusion, and that, whatever mist of evil might seem to have gathered over  
25 her, the real Beatrice was a heavenly angel. Incapable as he was of such high faith, still her presence had not utterly lost its magic. Giovanni's rage was quelled into an aspect of sullen insensibility. Beatrice, with a quick spiritual sense, immediately felt that there was a gulf of blackness between them which neither he nor she could pass. They walked on together, sad and silent, and  
30 came thus to the marble fountain and to its pool of water on the ground, in the midst of which grew the shrub that bore gem-like blossoms. Giovanni was affrighted at the eager enjoyment—the appetite, as it were—with which he found himself inhaling the fragrance of the flowers.

"Beatrice," asked he, abruptly, "whence came this shrub?"

35 "My father created it," answered she, with simplicity.

"Created it! created it!" repeated Giovanni. "What mean you, Beatrice?"

"He is a man fearfully acquainted with the secrets of Nature," replied Beatrice; "and at the hour when I first drew breath this plant sprang from the soil, the offspring of his science, of his intellect, while I was but his earthly child.  
40 Approach it not!" continued she, observing with terror that Giovanni was drawing nearer to the shrub. "It has qualities that you little dream of. But I, dearest Giovanni,—I grew up and blossomed with the plant and was nourished with its breath. It was my sister, and I loved it with a human affection; for, alas!—hast thou not suspected it?—there was an awful doom."

45 Here Giovanni frowned so darkly upon her that Beatrice paused and trembled. But her faith in his tenderness reassured her, and made her blush that she had doubted for an instant.

"There was an awful doom," she continued, "the effect of my father's fatal love of science, which estranged me from all society of my kind. Until Heaven sent thee, dearest Giovanni, oh, how lonely was thy poor Beatrice!"

"Was it a hard doom?" asked Giovanni, fixing his eyes upon her.

"Only of late have I known how hard it was," answered she, tenderly. "Oh, 5  
yes; but my heart was torpid, and therefore quiet."

Giovanni's rage broke forth from his sullen gloom like a lightning-flash out of a dark cloud.

"Accursed one!" cried he, with venomous scorn and anger. "And, finding thy solitude wearisome, thou hast severed me likewise from all the warmth of 10  
life and enticed me into thy region of unspeakable horror!"

"Giovanni!" exclaimed Beatrice, turning her large bright eyes upon his face. The force of his words had not found its way into her mind; she was merely thunderstruck.

"Yes, poisonous thing!" repeated Giovanni, beside himself with passion. 15  
"Thou hast done it! Thou hast blasted me! Thou hast filled my veins with poison! Thou hast made me as hateful, as ugly, as loathsome and deadly a creature as thyself—a world's wonder of hideous monstrosity! Now, if our breath be happily as fatal to ourselves as to all others, let us join our lips in one kiss of unutterable hatred, and so die!" 20

"What has befallen me?" murmured Beatrice, with a low moan out of her heart. "Holy Virgin, pity me, a poor heart-broken child!"

"Thou,—dost thou pray?" cried Giovanni, still with the same fiendish scorn. "Thy very prayers, as they come from thy lips taint the atmosphere with death. Yes; let us pray! Let us to church and dip our fingers in the holy water 25  
at the portal! They that come after us will perish as by a pestilence! Let us sign crosses in the air! It will be scattering curses abroad in the likeness of holy symbols!"

"Giovanni," said Beatrice calmly, for her grief was beyond passion, "why dost thou join thyself with me thus in those terrible words? I, it is true, am 30  
the horrible thing thou namest me. But thou,—what hast thou to do, save with one other shudder at my hideous misery to go forth out of the garden and mingle with thy race, and forget that there ever crawled on earth such a monster as poor Beatrice?"

"Dost thou pretend ignorance?" asked Giovanni, scowling upon her. "Be- 35  
hold! this power have I gained from the pure daughter of Rappaccini."

There was a swarm of summer insects flitting through the air in search of the food promised by the flower odors of the fatal garden. They circled round Giovanni's head, and were evidently attracted toward him by the same in- 40  
fluence which had drawn them for an instant within the sphere of several of the shrubs. He sent forth a breath among them, and smiled bitterly at Beatrice as at least a score of the insects fell dead upon the ground.

"I see it! I see it!" shrieked Beatrice. "It is my father's fatal science! No, no, Giovanni; it was not I! Never, never! I dreamed only to love thee and be 45  
with thee a little time, and so to let thee pass away, leaving but thine image in mine heart. For, Giovanni, believe it, though my body be nourished with poison, my spirit is God's creature, and craves love as its daily food. But my

father,—he has united us in this fearful sympathy. Yes; spurn me, tread upon me, kill me! Oh, what is death after such words as thine? But it was not I. Not for a world of bliss would I have done it."

Giovanni's passion had exhausted itself in its outburst from his lips. There  
 5 now came across him a sense, mournful, and not without tenderness, of the intimate and peculiar relationship between Beatrice and himself. They stood, as it were, in an utter solitude, which would be made none the less solitary by the densest throng of human life. Ought not, then, the desert of humanity around them to press this insulated pair closely together? If they should be cruel  
 10 to one another, who was there to be kind to them? Besides, thought Giovanni, might there not still be a hope of his returning within the limits of ordinary nature, and leading Beatrice, the redeemed Beatrice, by the hand? Oh, weak, and selfish, and unworthy spirit, that could dream of an earthly union and earthly happiness as possible after such deep love had been so bitterly wronged  
 15 as was Beatrice's love by Giovanni's blighting words! No, no; there could be no such hope. She must pass heavily, with that broken heart, across the borders of Time—she must bathe her hurts in some fount of paradise, and forget her grief in the light of immortality, and *there* be well.

But Giovanni did not know it.

20 "Dear Beatrice," said he, approaching her, while she shrank away as always at his approach, but now with a different impulse, "dearest Beatrice, our fate is not yet so desperate. Behold! there is a medicine, potent, as a wise physician has assured me, and almost divine in its efficacy. It is composed of ingredients the most opposite to those by which thy awful father has brought this calamity  
 25 upon thee and me. It is distilled of blessed herbs. Shall we not quaff it together, and thus be purified from evil?"

"Give it me!" said Beatrice, extending her hand to receive the little silver vial which Giovanni took from his bosom. She added, with a peculiar emphasis, "I will drink; but do thou await the result."

30 She put Baglioni's antidote to her lips; and, at the same moment, the figure of Rappaccini emerged from the portal and came slowly toward the marble fountain. As he drew near, the pale man of science seemed to gaze with a triumphant expression at the beautiful youth and maiden, as might an artist who should spend his life in achieving a picture or a group of statuary and  
 35 finally be satisfied with his success. He paused; his bent form grew erect with conscious power; he spread out his hand over them in the attitude of a father imploring a blessing upon his children; but those were the same hands that had thrown poison into the stream of their lives. Giovanni trembled. Beatrice shuddered nervously, and pressed her hand upon her heart.

40 "My daughter," said Rappaccini, "thou art no longer lonely in the world. Pluck one of those precious gems from thy sister shrub and bid thy bridegroom wear it in his bosom. It will not harm him now. My science and the sympathy between thee and him have so wrought within his system that he now stands apart from common men, as thou dost, daughter of my pride and triumph, from ordinary women. Pass on, then, through the world, most dear  
 45 to one another and dreadful to all besides!"

"My father," said Beatrice, feebly,—and still as she spoke she kept her hand

upon her heart,—“wherefore didst thou inflict this miserable doom upon thy child?”

“Miserable!” exclaimed Rappaccini. “What mean you, foolish girl? Dost thou deem it misery to be endowed with marvelous gifts against which no power nor strength could avail an enemy—misery, to be able to quell the mightiest with a breath—misery, to be as terrible as thou art beautiful? Wouldst thou, then, have preferred the condition of a weak woman, exposed to all evil and capable of none?”

“I would fain have been loved, not feared,” murmured Beatrice, sinking down upon the ground. “But now it matters not. I am going, father, where the evil which thou hast striven to mingle with my being will pass away like a dream—like the fragrance of these poisonous flowers, which will no longer taint my breath among the flowers of Eden. Farewell, Giovanni! Thy words of hatred are like lead within my heart; but they, too, will fall away as I ascend. Oh, was there not, from the first, more poison in thy nature than in mine?”

To Beatrice,—so radically had her earthly part been wrought upon by Rappaccini’s skill,—as poison had been life, so the powerful antidote was death; and thus the poor victim of man’s ingenuity and of thwarted nature, and of the fatality that attends all such efforts of perverted wisdom, perished there, at the feet of her father and Giovanni.

Just at that moment Professor Pietro Baglioni looked forth from the window, and called loudly, in a tone of triumph mixed with horror, to the thunder-stricken man of science,

“Rappaccini! Rappaccini! And is *this* the upshot of your experiment!”

## THE OLD MANSE

THE AUTHOR MAKES THE READER ACQUAINTED WITH HIS ABODE

Introductory essay to *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846), though written last in the series. This historic Concord residence was built in 1765 by Emerson’s grandfather, the Rev. William Emerson, who witnessed the fight with the British at Concord bridge. The next resident, the Rev. Ezra Ripley, “the latest inhabitant,” planted the apple trees. Emerson lived here, and wrote his essay *Nature* in this house before Hawthorne came to occupy it upon his marriage in 1842.

**B**ETWEEN two tall gateposts of rough-hewn stone (the gate itself having fallen from its hinges at some unknown epoch) we beheld the gray front of the old parsonage terminating the vista of an avenue of black ash-trees. It was now a twelvemonth since the funeral procession of the venerable clergyman, its last inhabitant, had turned from that gateway towards the village burying-ground. The wheel-track leading to the door, as well as the whole breadth of the avenue, was almost overgrown with grass, affording dainty mouthfuls to two or three vagrant cows and an old white horse who had his own living to pick up along the roadside. The glimmering shadows that lay half asleep between the door of the house and the public highway were a

kind of spiritual medium, seen through which the edifice had not quite the aspect of belonging to the material world. Certainly it had little in common with those ordinary abodes which stand so imminent upon the road that every passer-by can thrust his head, as it were, into the domestic circle. From these  
 5 quiet windows the figures of passing travellers looked too remote and dim to disturb the sense of privacy. In its near retirement and accessible seclusion it was the very spot for the residence of a clergyman,—a man not estranged from human life, yet enveloped in the midst of it with a veil woven of intermingled gloom and brightness. It was worthy to have been one of the time-honored  
 10 parsonages of England in which, through many generations, a succession of holy occupants pass from youth to age, and bequeath each an inheritance of sanctity to pervade the house and hover over it as with an atmosphere.

Nor, in truth, had the Old Manse ever been profaned by a lay occupant until that memorable summer afternoon when I entered it as my home. A priest had  
 15 built it; a priest had succeeded to it; other priestly men from time to time had dwelt in it; and children born in its chambers had grown up to assume the priestly character. It was awful to reflect how many sermons must have been written there. The latest inhabitant alone—he by whose translation to paradise the dwelling was left vacant—had penned nearly three thousand discourses,  
 20 besides the better, if not the greater, number that gushed living from his lips. How often, no doubt, had he paced to and fro along the avenue, attuning his meditations to the sighs and gentle murmurs, and deep and solemn peals of the wind among the lofty tops of the trees! In that variety of natural utterances he could find something accordant with every passage of his sermon, were it  
 25 of tenderness or reverential fear. The boughs over my head seemed shadowy with solemn thoughts as well as with rustling leaves. I took shame to myself for having been so long a writer of idle stories, and ventured to hope that wisdom would descend upon me with the falling leaves of the avenue, and that I should light upon an intellectual treasure in the Old Manse well worth those  
 30 hoards of long-hidden gold which people seek for in moss-grown houses. Profound treatises of morality; a layman's unprofessional and therefore unprejudiced views of religion; histories (such as Bancroft might have written had he taken up his abode here as he once purposed) bright with picture, gleaming over a depth of philosophic thought,—these were the works that might fitly  
 35 have flowed from such a retirement. In the humblest event I resolved at least to achieve a novel that should evolve some deep lesson and should possess physical substance enough to stand alone.

In furtherance of my design, and as if to leave me no pretext for not fulfilling it, there was in the rear of the house the most delightful little nook of a study  
 40 that ever afforded its snug seclusion to a scholar. It was here that Emerson wrote *Nature*; for he was then an inhabitant of the Manse, and used to watch the Assyrian dawn and Paphian sunset and moonrise from the summit of our eastern hill. When I first saw the room its walls were blackened with the smoke of unnumbered years, and made still blacker by the grim prints of Puritan

32. *Bancroft*—George Bancroft (1800-1891), author of *History of the United States* (1834-74), and the man who in 1839 had secured Hawthorne his position in the Boston Custom House. 42. *Assyrian* . . . —Cf. Emerson, *Nature*, p. 400.

ministers that hung around. These worthies looked strangely like bad angels, or at least like men who had wrestled so continually and so sternly with the devil that somewhat of his sooty fierceness had been imparted to their own visages. They had all vanished now; a cheerful coat of paint and golden-tinted paper-hangings lighted up the small apartment; while the shadow of a willow-tree that swept against the overhanging eaves attempered the cheery western sunshine. In place of the grim prints there was the sweet and lovely head of one of Raphael's Madonnas and two pleasant little pictures of the Lake of Como. The only other decorations were a purple vase of flowers, always fresh, and a bronze one containing graceful ferns. My books (few, and by no means choice; for they were chiefly such waifs as chance had thrown in my way) stood in order about the room, seldom to be disturbed. 5 10

The study had three windows, set with little, old-fashioned panes of glass, each with a crack across it. The two on the western side looked, or rather peeped, between the willow branches down into the orchard, with glimpses of the river through the trees. The third, facing northward, commanded a broader view of the river at a spot where its hitherto obscure waters gleam forth into the light of history. It was at this window that the clergyman who then dwelt in the Manse stood watching the outbreak of a long and deadly struggle between two nations; he saw the irregular array of his parishioners on the farther side of the river and the glittering line of the British on the hither bank. He awaited in an agony of suspense the rattle of the musketry. It came, and there needed but a gentle wind to sweep the battle smoke around this quiet house. 15 20

Perhaps the reader, whom I cannot help considering as my guest in the Old Manse and entitled to all courtesy in the way of sight-showing,—perhaps he will choose to take a nearer view of the memorable spot. We stand now on the river's brink. It may well be called the Concord, the river of peace and quietness; for it is certainly the most unexcitable and sluggish stream that ever loitered imperceptibly towards its eternity—the sea. Positively, I had lived three weeks beside it before it grew quite clear to my perception which way the current flowed. It never has a vivacious aspect except when a northwestern breeze is vexing its surface on a sunshiny day. From the incurable indolence of its nature, the stream is happily incapable of becoming the slave of human ingenuity, as is the fate of so many a wild, free mountain torrent. While all things else are compelled to subserve some useful purpose, it idles its sluggish life away in lazy liberty, without turning a solitary spindle or affording even water-power enough to grind the corn that grows upon its banks. The torpor of its movement allows it nowhere a bright, pebbly shore, nor so much as a narrow strip of glistening sand, in any part of its course. It slumbers between broad prairies, kissing the long meadow grass, and bathes the overhanging boughs of elder bushes and willows or the roots of elms and ash-trees and clumps of maples. Flags and rushes grow along its plashy shore; the yellow water-lily spreads its broad, flat leaves on the margin; and the fragrant white pond-lily abounds, generally selecting a position just so far from the river's brink that it cannot be grasped save at the hazard of plunging in. 25 30 35 40

It is a marvel whence this perfect flower derives its loveliness and perfume, springing as it does from the black mud over which the river sleeps, and where 45



lurk the slimy eel and speckled frog and the mud turtle, whom continual washing cannot cleanse. It is the very same black mud out of which the yellow lily sucks its obscene life and noisome odor. Thus we see, too, in the world that some persons assimilate only what is ugly and evil from the same moral circumstances which supply good and beautiful results—the fragrance of celestial flowers—to the daily life of others.

The reader must not, from any testimony of mine, contract a dislike towards our slumberous stream. In the light of a calm and golden sunset it becomes lovely beyond expression; the more lovely for the quietude that so well accords with the hour, when even the wind, after blustering all day long, usually hushes itself to rest. Each tree and rock, and every blade of grass, is distinctly imaged, and, however unsightly in reality, assumes ideal beauty in the reflection. The minutest things of earth and the broad aspect of the firmament are pictured equally without effort and with the same felicity of success. All the sky glows downward at our feet; the rich clouds float through the unruffled bosom of the stream like heavenly thoughts through a peaceful heart. We will not, then, malign our river as gross and impure while it can glorify itself with so adequate a picture of the heaven that broods above it; or, if we remember its tawny hue and the muddiness of its bed, let it be a symbol that the earthliest human soul has an infinite spiritual capacity and may contain the better world within its depths. But, indeed, the same lesson might be drawn out of any mud puddle in the streets of a city; and, being taught us everywhere, it must be true.

Come, we have pursued a somewhat devious track in our walk to the battle-ground. Here we are, at the point where the river was crossed by the old bridge, the possession of which was the immediate object of the contest. On the hither side grow two or three elms, throwing a wide circumference of shade, but which must have been planted at some period within the threescore years and ten that have passed since the battle day. On the farther shore, overhung by a clump of elder bushes, we discern the stone abutment of the bridge. Looking down into the river, I once discovered some heavy fragments of the timbers, all green with half a century's growth of water moss; for during that length of time the tramp of horses and human footsteps has ceased along this ancient highway. The stream has here about the breadth of twenty strokes of a swimmer's arm,—a space not too wide when the bullets were whistling across. Old people who dwell hereabouts will point out the very spots on the western bank where our countrymen fell down and died; and on this side of the river an obelisk of granite has grown up from the soil that was fertilized with British blood. The monument, not more than twenty feet in height, is such as it befitted the inhabitants of a village to erect in illustration of a matter of local interest rather than what was suitable to commemorate an epoch of national history. Still, by the fathers of the village this famous deed was done; and their descendants might rightfully claim the privilege of building a memorial.

A humbler token of the fight, yet a more interesting one than the granite obelisk, may be seen close under the stone-wall which separates the battle-ground from the precincts of the parsonage. It is the grave—marked by a small, mossgrown fragment of stone at the head and another at the foot—the grave

of two British soldiers who were slain in the skirmish, and have ever since slept peacefully where Zechariah Brown and Thomas Davis buried them. Soon was their warfare ended; a weary night march from Boston, a rattling volley of musketry across the river, and then these many years of rest. In the long procession of slain invaders who passed into eternity from the battle-  
fields of the revolution, these two nameless soldiers led the way. 5

Lowell, the poet, as we were once standing over this grave, told me a tradition in reference to one of the inhabitants below. The story has something deeply impressive, though its circumstances cannot altogether be reconciled with probability. A youth in the service of the clergyman happened to be chopping  
wood, that April morning, at the back door of the Manse, and when the noise  
of battle rang from side to side of the bridge he hastened across the intervening  
field to see what might be going forward. It is rather strange, by the way,  
that this lad should have been so diligently at work when the whole population  
of town and country were startled out of their customary business by the advance  
of the British troops. Be that as it might, the tradition says that the lad  
now left his task and hurried to the battle-field with the axe still in his hand.  
The British had by this time retreated, the Americans were in pursuit; and the  
late scene of strife was thus deserted by both parties. Two soldiers lay on the  
ground—one was a corpse; but, as the young New Englander drew nigh, the  
other Briton raised himself painfully upon his hands and knees and gave a  
ghastly stare into his face. The boy,—it must have been a nervous impulse,  
without purpose, without thought, and betokening a sensitive and impressible  
nature rather than a hardened one,—the boy uplifted his axe and dealt the  
wounded soldier a fierce and fatal blow upon the head. 25

I could wish that the grave might be opened; for I would fain know whether either of the skeleton soldiers has the mark of an axe in his skull. The story comes home to me like truth. Oftentimes, as an intellectual and moral exercise, I have sought to follow that poor youth through his subsequent career, and observe how his soul was tortured by the blood stain, contracted as it had been  
before the long custom of war had robbed human life of its sanctity, and while  
it still seemed murderous to slay a brother man. This one circumstance has  
borne more fruit for me than all that history tells us of the fight. 30

Many strangers come in the summer time to view the battle-ground. For my own part, I have never found my imagination much excited by this or any  
other scene of historic celebrity; nor would the placid margin of the river have  
lost any of its charm for me had men never fought and died there. There is a  
wilder interest in the tract of land—perhaps a hundred yards in breadth—  
which extends between the battle-field and the northern face of our Old Manse,  
with its contiguous avenue and orchard. Here, in some unknown age, before  
the white man came, stood an Indian village, convenient to the river, whence  
its inhabitants must have drawn so large a part of their subsistence. The site is  
identified by the spear and arrow heads, the chisels, and other implements of  
war, labor, and the chase, which the plough turns up from the soil. You see a  
splinter of stone, half hidden beneath a sod; it looks like nothing worthy of  
note; but, if you have faith enough to pick it up, behold a relic! Thoreau, who  
has a strange faculty of finding what the Indians have left behind them, first 45

set me on the search; and I afterwards enriched myself with some very perfect specimens, so rudely wrought that it seemed almost as if chance had fashioned them. Their great charm consists in this rudeness and in the individuality of each article, so different from the productions of civilized machinery, which  
5 shapes everything on one pattern. There is exquisite delight, too, in picking up for one's self an arrowhead that was dropped centuries ago and has never been handled since, and which we thus receive directly from the hand of the red hunter, who purposed to shoot it at his game or at an enemy. Such an incident builds up again the Indian village and its encircling forest, and recalls to life the  
10 painted chiefs and warriors, the squaws at their household toil, and the children sporting among the wigwams, while the little wind-rocked pappoose swings from the branch of the tree. It can hardly be told whether it is a joy or a pain, after such a momentary vision, to gaze around in the broad daylight of reality and see stone fences, white houses, potato fields, and men doggedly  
15 hoeing in their shirt-sleeves and homespun pantaloons. But this is nonsense. The Old Manse is better than a thousand wigwams.

The Old Manse! We had almost forgotten it, but will return thither through the orchard. This was set out by the last clergyman, in the decline of his life, when the neighbors laughed at the hoary-headed man for planting trees from  
20 which he could have no prospect of gathering fruit. Even had that been the case, there was only so much the better motive for planting them, in the pure and unselfish hope of benefiting his successors,—an end so seldom achieved by more ambitious efforts. But the old minister, before reaching his patriarchal age of ninety, ate the apples from this orchard during many years, and added  
25 silver and gold to his annual stipend by disposing of the superfluity. It is pleasant to think of him walking among the trees in the quiet afternoons of early autumn and picking up here and there a windfall, while he observes how heavily the branches are weighed down, and computes the number of empty flour barrels that will be filled by their burden. He loved each tree, doubtless,  
30 as if it had been his own child. An orchard has a relation to mankind, and readily connects itself with matters of the heart. The trees possess a domestic character; they have lost the wild nature of their forest kindred, and have grown humanized by receiving the care of man as well as by contributing to his wants. There is so much individuality of character, too, among apple-  
35 trees that it gives them an additional claim to be the objects of human interest. One is harsh and crabbed in its manifestations; another gives us fruit as mild as charity. One is churlish and illiberal, evidently grudging the few apples that it bears; another exhausts itself in free-hearted benevolence. The variety of grotesque shapes into which apple-trees contort themselves has its effect on  
40 those who get acquainted with them: they stretch out their crooked branches, and take such hold of the imagination that we remember them as humorists and odd-fellows. And what is more melancholy than the old apple-trees that linger about the spot where once stood a homestead, but where there is now only a ruined chimney rising out of a grassy and weed-grown cellar? They  
45 offer their fruit to every wayfarer,—apples that are bitter sweet with the moral of Time's vicissitude.

I have met with no other such pleasant trouble in the world as that of finding

myself, with only the two or three mouths which it was my privilege to feed, the sole inheritor of the old clergyman's wealth of fruits. Throughout the summer there were cherries and currants; and then came autumn, with his immense burden of apples, dropping them continually from his overladen shoulders as he trudged along. In the stillest afternoon, if I listened, the thump of a great apple was audible, falling without a breath of wind, from the mere necessity of perfect ripeness. And, besides, there were pear-trees, that flung down bushels upon bushels of heavy pears; and peach-trees, which, in a good year, tormented me with peaches, neither to be eaten nor kept, nor, without labor and perplexity, to be given away. The idea of an infinite generosity and exhaustless bounty on the part of our Mother Nature was well worth obtaining through such cares as these. That feeling can be enjoyed in perfection only by the natives of summer islands, where the bread-fruit, the cocoa, the palm, and the orange grow spontaneously and hold forth the ever-ready meal; but likewise almost as well by a man long habituated to city life, who plunges into such a solitude as that of the Old Manse, where he plucks the fruit of trees that he did not plant, and which therefore, to my heterodox taste, bear the closest resemblance to those that grew in Eden. It has been an apothegm these five thousand years, that toil sweetens the bread it earns. For my part (speaking from hard experience, acquired while belaboring the rugged furrows of Brook Farm), I relish best the free gifts of Providence.

Not that it can be disputed that the light toil requisite to cultivate a moderately-sized garden imparts such zest to kitchen vegetables as is never found in those of the market gardener. Childless men, if they would know something of the bliss of paternity, should plant a seed,—be it squash, bean, Indian corn, or perhaps a mere flower or worthless weed,—should plant it with their own hands, and nurse it from infancy to maturity altogether by their own care. If there be not too many of them, each individual plant becomes an object of separate interest. My garden, that skirted the avenue of the Manse, was of precisely the right extent. An hour or two of morning labor was all that it required. But I used to visit and revisit it a dozen times a day, and stand in deep contemplation over my vegetable progeny with a love that nobody could share or conceive of who had never taken part in the process of creation. It was one of the most bewitching sights in the world to observe a hill of beans thrusting aside the soil, or a row of early peas just peeping forth sufficiently to trace a line of delicate green. Later in the season the humming-birds were attracted by the blossoms of a peculiar variety of bean; and they were a joy to me, those little spiritual visitants, for deigning to sip airy food out of my nectar cups. Multitudes of bees used to bury themselves in the yellow blossoms of the summer squashes. This, too, was a deep satisfaction; although when they had laden themselves with sweets they flew away to some unknown hive, which would give back nothing in requital of what my garden had contributed. But I was glad thus to fling a benefaction upon the passing breeze with the certainty that somebody must profit by it, and that there would be a little more honey in the world to allay the sourness and bitterness which mankind is

20-21. **Brook Farm**—Hawthorne joined this idealistic colony in 1841 but after several months complained of its "thralldom and weariness."

always complaining of. Yes, indeed; my life was the sweeter for that honey.

Speaking of summer squashes, I must say a word of their beautiful and varied forms. They presented an endless diversity of urns and vases, shallow or deep, scalloped or plain, moulded in patterns which a sculptor would do well to copy, since Art has never invented anything more graceful. A hundred squashes in the garden were worthy, in my eyes at least, of being rendered indestructible in marble. If ever Providence (but I know it never will) should assign me a superfluity of gold, part of it shall be expended for a service of plate, or most delicate porcelain, to be wrought into the shapes of summer squashes gathered from vines which I will plant with my own hands. As dishes for containing vegetables they would be peculiarly appropriate.

But not merely the squeamish love of the beautiful was gratified by my toil in the kitchen garden. There was a hearty enjoyment, likewise, in observing the growth of the crook-necked winter squashes, from the first little bulb, with the withered blossom adhering to it, until they lay strewn upon the soil, big, round fellows, hiding their heads beneath the leaves, but turning up their great yellow rotundities to the noontide sun. Gazing at them, I felt that by my agency something worth living for had been done. A new substance was born into the world. They were real and tangible existences, which the mind could seize hold of and rejoice in. A cabbage, too,—especially the early Dutch cabbage, which swells to a monstrous circumference, until its ambitious heart often bursts asunder,—is a matter to be proud of when we can claim a share with the earth and sky in producing it. But, after all, the hugest pleasure is reserved until these vegetable children of ours are smoking on the table, and we, like Saturn, make a meal of them.

What with the river, the battle-field, the orchard and the garden, the reader begins to despair of finding his way back into the Old Manse. But in agreeable weather it is the truest hospitality to keep him out-of-doors. I never grew quite acquainted with my habitation till a long spell of sulky rain had confined me beneath its roof. There could not be a more sombre aspect of external Nature than as then seen from the windows of my study. The great willow-tree had caught and retained among its leaves a whole cataract of water, to be shaken down at intervals by the frequent gusts of wind. All day long, and for a week together, the rain was drip-drip-dripping and splash-splash-splashing from the eaves, and bubbling and foaming into the tubs beneath the spouts. The old, unpainted shingles of the house and out-buildings were black with moisture; and the mosses of ancient growth upon the walls looked green and fresh, as if they were the newest things and afterthought of Time. The usually mirrored surface of the river was blurred by an infinity of raindrops; the whole landscape had a completely water-soaked appearance, conveying the impression that the earth was wet through like a sponge; while the summit of a wooded hill, about a mile distant, was enveloped in a dense mist, where the demon of the tempest seemed to have his abiding-place and to be plotting still direr inclemencies.

Nature has no kindness, no hospitality, during a rain. In the fiercest heat of sunny days she retains a secret mercy, and welcomes the wayfarer to shady nooks of the woods whither the sun cannot penetrate; but she provides no

shelter against her storms. It makes us shiver to think of those deep, umbrageous recesses, those overshadowing banks, where we found such enjoyment during the sultry afternoons. Not a twig of foliage there but would dash a little shower into our faces. Looking reproachfully towards the impenetrable sky,—if sky there be above that dismal uniformity of cloud,—we are apt to murmur against the whole system of the universe, since it involves the extinction of so many summer days in so short a life by the hissing and spluttering rain. In such spells of weather—and it is to be supposed such weather came—Eve's bower in paradise must have been but a cheerless and aguish kind of shelter, nowise comparable to the old parsonage, which had resources of its own to beguile the week's imprisonment. The idea of sleeping on a couch of wet roses!

Happy the man who in a rainy day can betake himself to a huge garret, stored, like that of the Manse, with lumber that each generation has left behind it from a period before the revolution. Our garret was an arched hall, dimly illuminated through small and dusty windows, it was but a twilight at the best; and there were nooks, or rather caverns, of deep obscurity, the secrets of which I never learned, being too reverent of their dust and cobwebs. The beams and rafters, roughly hewn and with strips of bark still on them, and the rude masonry of the chimneys, made the garret look wild and uncivilized,—an aspect unlike what was seen elsewhere in the quiet and decorous old house. But on one side there was a little whitewashed apartment which bore the traditionary title of the Saint's Chamber, because holy men in their youth had slept and studied and prayed there. With its elevated retirement, its one window, its small fireplace, and its closet, convenient for an oratory, it was the very spot where a young man might inspire himself with solemn enthusiasm and cherish saintly dreams. The occupants, at various epochs, had left brief records and ejaculations inscribed upon the walls. There, too, hung a tattered and shrivelled roll of canvas, which on inspection proved to be the forcibly wrought picture of a clergyman, in wig, band, and gown, holding a Bible in his hand. As I turned his face towards the light he eyed me with an air of authority such as men of his profession seldom assume in our days. The original had been pastor of the parish more than a century ago, a friend of Whitefield, and almost his equal in fervid eloquence. I bowed before the effigy of the dignified divine, and felt as if I had now met face to face with the ghost by whom, as there was reason to apprehend, the Manse was haunted.

Houses of any antiquity in New England are so invariably possessed with spirits that the matter seems hardly worth alluding to. Our ghost used to heave deep sighs in a particular corner of the parlor, and sometimes rustled paper, as if he were turning over a sermon in the long upper entry,—where nevertheless he was invisible in spite of the bright moonshine that fell through the eastern window. Not improbably he wished me to edit and publish a selection from a chest full of manuscript discourses that stood in the garret. Once, while Hillard and other friends sat talking with us in the twilight, there came a

13. **lumber**—useless odds and ends. 24. **oratory**—a small chapel for prayer. 31. **original**—the Rev. Daniel Bliss, maternal ancestor of Emerson, at whose invitation the English Calvinist George Whitefield (1714-1770) twice preached at Concord. 34. **ghost**—Hawthorne was amused by his wife's interest in spiritualism. 43. **Hillard**—George Stillman Hillard (1808-1879), lawyer and minor author.

rustling noise as of a minister's silk gown, sweeping through the very midst of the company so closely as almost to brush against the chairs. Still there was nothing visible. A yet stranger business was that of a ghostly servant maid, who used to be heard in the kitchen at deepest midnight, grinding coffee, cooking, ironing,—performing, in short, all kinds of domestic labor,—although no traces of anything accomplished could be detected the next morning. Some neglected duty of her servitude—some ill-starved ministerial band—disturbed the poor damsel in her grave and kept her at work without any wages.

But to return from this digression. A part of my predecessor's library was stored in the garret,—no unfit receptacle indeed for such dreary trash as comprised the greater number of volumes. The old books would have been worth nothing at an auction. In this venerable garret, however, they possessed an interest, quite apart from their literary value, as heirlooms, many of which had been transmitted down through a series of consecrated hands from the days of the mighty Puritan divines. Autographs of famous names were to be seen in faded ink on some of their flyleaves; and there were marginal observations or interpolated pages closely covered with manuscript in illegible shorthand, perhaps concealing matter of profound truth and wisdom. The world will never be the better for it. A few of the books were Latin folios, written by Catholic authors; others demolished Papistry, as with a sledge-hammer, in plain English. A dissertation on the book of Job—which only Job himself could have had patience to read—filled at least a score of small, thickest quartos, at the rate of two or three volumes to a chapter. Then there was a vast folio body of divinity—too corpulent a body, it might be feared, to comprehend the spiritual element of religion. Volumes of this form dated back two hundred years or more, and were generally bound in black leather, exhibiting precisely such an appearance as we should attribute to books of enchantment. Others equally antique were of a size proper to be carried in the large waistcoat pockets of old times,—diminutive, but as black as their bulkier brethren, and abundantly interfused with Greek and Latin quotations. These little old volumes impressed me as if they had been intended for very large ones, but had been unfortunately blighted at an early stage of their growth.

The rain pattered upon the roof and the sky gloomed through the dusty garret windows, while I burrowed among these venerable books in search of any living thought which should burn like a coal of fire, or glow like an extinguishable gem, beneath the dead trumpery that had long hidden it. But I found no such treasure; all was dead alike; and I could not but muse deeply and wonderingly upon the humiliating fact that the works of man's intellect decay like those of his hands. Thought grows mouldy. What was good and nourishing food for the spirits of one generation affords no sustenance for the next. Books of religion, however, cannot be considered a fair test of the enduring and vivacious properties of human thought, because such books so seldom really touch upon their ostensible subject, and have, therefore, so little business to be written at all. So long as an unlettered soul can attain to saving grace, there would seem to be no deadly error in holding theological libraries to be accumulations of, for the most part, stupendous impertinence.

Many of the books had accrued in the latter years of the last clergyman's

lifetime. These threatened to be of even less interest than the elder works, a century hence, to any curious inquirer who should then rummage them as I was doing now. Volumes of the "Liberal Preacher" and "Christian Examiner," occasional sermons, controversial pamphlets, tracts, and other productions of a like fugitive nature took the place of the thick and heavy volumes of past time. 5 In a physical point of view there was much the same difference as between a feather and a lump of lead; but, intellectually regarded, the specific gravity of old and new was about upon a par. Both also were alike frigid. The elder books, nevertheless, seemed to have been earnestly written, and might be conceived to have possessed warmth at some former period; although, with the lapse of time, the heated masses had cooled down even to the freezing point. 10 The frigidity of the modern productions, on the other hand, was characteristic and inherent, and evidently had little to do with the writer's qualities of mind and heart. In fine, of this whole dusty heap of literature I tossed aside all the sacred part, and felt myself none the less a Christian for eschewing it. There 15 appeared no hope of either mounting to the better world on a Gothic staircase of ancient folios or of flying thither on the wings of a modern tract.

Nothing, strange to say, retained any sap except what had been written for the passing day and year without the remotest pretension or idea of permanence. There were a few old newspapers, and still older almanacs, which reproduced to my mental eye the epochs when they had issued from the press with a distinctness that was altogether unaccountable. It was as if I had found bits of magic looking-glass among the books, with the images of a vanished century in them. I turned my eyes towards the tattered picture above mentioned, and asked of the austere divine wherefore it was that he and his brethren, after the most painful rummaging and groping into their minds, had been able to produce nothing half so real as these newspaper scribblers and almanac makers had thrown off in the effervescence of a moment. The portrait responded not; so I sought an answer for myself. It is the age itself that writes newspapers and almanacs, which, therefore, have a distinct purpose and meaning at the time, and a kind of intelligible truth for all times; whereas most other works—being written by men who, in the very act, set themselves apart from their age—are likely to possess little significance when new, and none at all when old. Genius, indeed, melts many ages into one, and thus effects something permanent, yet still with a similarity of office to that of the more ephemeral writer. A work of genius is but the newspaper of a century, or perchance of a hundred centuries. 20 25 30 35

Lightly as I have spoken of these old books, there yet lingers with me a superstitious reverence for literature of all kinds. A bound volume has a charm in my eyes similar to what scraps of manuscript possess for the good Mussulman. He imagines that those wind-wafted records are perhaps hallowed by some sacred verse; and I, that every new book or antique one may contain the "open sesame,"—the spell to disclose treasures hidden in some unsuspected cave of Truth. Thus it was not without sadness that I turned away from the library of the Old Manse. 40 45

3. "Liberal Preacher . . . Christian Examiner"—the *Liberal Preacher*, a monthly magazine of sermons, published 1827-30 and 1831-36; the *Christian Examiner*, a theological review, published 1824-69. 40. Mussulman—a Moslem.



Blessed was the sunshine when it came again at the close of another stormy day, beaming from the edge of the western horizon; while the massive firmament of clouds threw down all the gloom it could, but served only to kindle the golden light into a more brilliant glow by the strongly contrasted shadows.

- 5 Heaven smiled at the earth, so long unseen, from beneath its heavy eyelid. To-morrow for the hill-tops and the wood paths.

- Or it might be that Ellery Channing came up the avenue to join me in a fishing excursion on the river. Strange and happy times were those when we cast aside all irksome forms and strait-laced habitudes, and delivered ourselves  
10 up to the free air, to live like the Indians or any less conventional race during one bright semicircle of the sun. Rowing our boat against the current, between wide meadows, we turned aside into the Assabeth. A more lovely stream than this, for a mile above its junction with the Concord, has never flowed on earth, —nowhere, indeed, except to lave the interior regions of a poet's imagination.  
15 It is sheltered from the breeze by woods and a hill-side; so that elsewhere there might be a hurricane, and here scarcely a ripple across the shaded water. The current lingers along so gently that the mere force of the boatman's will seems sufficient to propel his craft against it. It comes flowing softly through the mid-most privacy and deepest heart of a wood which whispers it to be quiet; while  
20 the stream whispers back again from its sedgy borders, as if river and wood were hushing one another to sleep. Yes; the river sleeps along its course and dreams of the sky and of the clustering foliage, amid which fall showers of broken sunlight, imparting specks of vivid cheerfulness, in contrast with the quiet depth of the prevailing tint. Of all this scene, the slumbering river has a  
25 dream picture in its bosom. Which, after all, was the most real—the picture, or the original?—the objects palpable to our grosser senses, or their apotheosis in the stream beneath? Surely the disembodied images stand in closer relation to the soul. But both the original and the reflection had here an ideal charm; and, had it been a thought more wild, I could have fancied that this river had strayed  
30 forth out of the rich scenery of my companion's inner world; only the vegetation along its banks should then have had an Oriental character.

- Gentle and unobtrusive as the river is, yet the tranquil woods seem hardly satisfied to allow it passage. The trees are rooted on the very verge of the water, and dip their pendent branches into it. At one spot there is a lofty bank, on  
35 the slope of which grow some hemlocks, declining across the stream with out-stretched arms, as if resolute to take the plunge. In other places the banks are almost on a level with the water; so that the quiet congregation of trees set their feet in the flood, and are fringed with foliage down to the surface. Cardinal flowers kindle their spiral flames and illuminate the dark nooks among the  
40 shrubbery. The pond-lily grows abundantly along the margin—that delicious flower, which, as Thoreau tells me, opens its virgin bosom to the first sunlight and perfects its being through the magic of that genial kiss. He has beheld beds of them unfolding in due succession as the sunrise stole gradually from flower to flower—a sight not to be hoped for unless when a poet adjusts his  
45 inward eye to a proper focus with the outward organ. Grape-vines here and

7. **Channing**—William Ellery Channing the younger, nephew of the famous Unitarian preacher, and one of the poets of transcendentalism. See pp. 387-388.

there twine themselves around shrub and tree and hang their clusters over the water within reach of the boatman's hand. Oftentimes they unite two trees of alien race in an inextricable twine, marrying the hemlock and the maple against their will, and enriching them with a purple offspring of which neither is the parent. One of these ambitious parasites has climbed into the upper branches 5 of a tall, white pine, and is still ascending from bough to bough, unsatisfied till it shall crown the tree's airy summit with a wreath of its broad foliage and a cluster of its grapes.

The winding course of the stream continually shut out the scene behind us, and revealed as calm and lovely a one before. We glided from depth to 10 depth, and breathed new seclusion at every turn. The shy kingfisher flew from the withered branch close at hand to another at a distance, uttering a shrill cry of anger or alarm. Ducks that had been floating there since the preceding eve were startled at our approach, and skimmed along the glassy river, breaking its dark surface with a bright streak. The pickerel leaped from among the lily- 15 pads. The turtle, sunning itself upon a rock or at the root of a tree, slid suddenly into the water with a plunge. The painted Indian who paddled his canoe along the Assabeth three hundred years ago could hardly have seen a wilder gentleness displayed upon its banks and reflected in its bosom than we did. Nor could the same Indian have prepared his noontide meal with more simplicity. 20 We drew up our skiff at some point where the overarching shade formed a natural bower, and there kindled a fire with the pine cones and decayed branches that lay strewn plentifully around. Soon the smoke ascended among the trees, impregnated with a savory incense, not heavy, dull, and surfeiting, like the steam of cookery within doors, but sprightly and piquant. The 25 smell of our feast was akin to the woodland odors with which it mingled: there was no sacrilege committed by our intrusion there: the sacred solitude was hospitable, and granted us free leave to cook and eat in the recess that was at once our kitchen and banqueting hall. It is strange what humble offices may be performed in a beautiful scene without destroying its poetry. Our fire, 30 red gleaming among the trees, and we beside it, busied with culinary rites and spreading out our meal on a mossgrown log, all seemed in unison with the river gliding by and the foliage rustling over us. And, what was strangest, neither did our mirth seem to disturb the propriety of the solemn woods; although the hobgoblins of the old wilderness and the will-of-the-wisps that 35 glimmered in the marshy places might have come trooping to share our table talk, and have added their shrill laughter to our merriment. It was the very spot in which to utter the extremest nonsense or the profoundest wisdom, or that ethereal product of the mind which partakes of both, and may become one or the other, in correspondence with the faith and insight of the auditor. 40

So amid sunshine and shadow, rustling leaves and sighing waters, up gushed our talk like the babble of a fountain. The evanescent spray was Ellery's; and his, too, the lumps of golden thought that lay glimmering in the fountain's bed and brightened both our faces by the reflection. Could he have drawn out that virgin gold and stamped it with the mint mark that alone gives currency, 45 the world might have had the profit, and he the fame. My mind was the richer merely by the knowledge that it was there. But the chief profit of those wild

days to him and me lay, not in any definite idea, not in any angular or rounded truth, which we dug out of the shapeless mass of problematical stuff, but in the freedom which we thereby won from all custom and conventionalism and fettering influences of man on man. We were so free to-day that it was impossible

5 to be slaves again to-morrow. When we crossed the threshold of the house or trod the thronged pavements of a city, still the leaves of the trees that overhang the Assabeth were whispering to us, "Be free! be free!" Therefore along that shady river-bank there are spots, marked with a heap of ashes and half-consumed brands, only less sacred in my remembrance than the hearth of a house-  
10 hold fire.

And yet how sweet, as we floated homeward adown the golden river at sunset,—how sweet was it to return within the system of human society, not as to a dungeon and a chain, but as to a stately edifice, whence we could go forth at will into statelier simplicity! How gently, too, did the sight of the Old Manse,  
15 best seen from the river, overshadowed with its willow and all environed about with the foliage of its orchard and avenue,—how gently did its gray, homely aspect rebuke the speculative extravagances of the day! It had grown sacred in connection with the artificial life against which we inveighed; it had been a home for many years in spite of all; it was my home too; and, with these thoughts,  
20 it seemed to me that all the artifice and conventionalism of life was but an impalpable thinness upon its surface, and that the depth below was none the worse for it. Once, as we turned our boat to the bank, there was a cloud, in the shape of an immensely gigantic figure of a hound, couched above the house, as if keeping guard over it. Gazing at this symbol, I prayed that the upper influ-  
25 ences might long protect the institutions that had grown out of the heart of mankind.

If ever my readers should decide to give up civilized life, cities, houses, and whatever moral or material enormities in addition to these the perverted ingenuity of our race has contrived, let it be in the early autumn. Then Nature  
30 will love him better than at any other season, and will take him to her bosom with a more motherly tenderness. I could scarcely endure the roof of the old house above me in those first autumnal days. How early in the summer, too, the prophecy of autumn comes! Earlier in some years than in others; sometimes even in the first weeks of July. There is no other feeling like what is  
35 caused by this faint, doubtful, yet real perception—if it be not rather a foreboding—of the year's decay, so blessedly sweet and sad in the same breath.

Did I say that there was no feeling like it? Ah, but there is a half-acknowledged melancholy like to this when we stand in the perfected vigor of our life and feel that Time has now given us all his flowers, and that the next work of  
40 his never idle fingers must be to steal them one by one away.

I have forgotten whether the song of the cricket be not as early a token of autumn's approach as any other,—that song which may be called an audible stillness; for though very loud and heard afar, yet the mind does not take note of it as a sound, so completely is its individual existence merged among the  
45 accompanying characteristics of the season. Alas for the pleasant summer time! In August the grass is still verdant on the hills and in the valleys; the foliage of the trees is as dense as ever, and as green; the flowers gleam forth in richer

abundance along the margin of the river, and by the stone walls, and deep among the woods; the days, too, are as fervid now as they were a month ago; and yet in every breath of wind and in every beam of sunshine we hear the whispered farewell and behold the parting smile of a dear friend. There is a coolness amid all the heat, a mildness in the blazing noon. Not a breeze can stir but it thrills us with the breath of autumn. A pensive glory is seen in the far golden gleams, among the shadows of the trees. The flowers—even the brightest of them, and they are the most gorgeous of the year—have this gentle sadness wedded to their pomp, and typify the character of the delicious time each within itself. The brilliant cardinal flower has never seemed gay to me. 5 10

Still later in the season Nature's tenderness waxes stronger. It is impossible not to be fond of our mother now; for she is so fond of us! At other periods she does not make this impression on me, or only at rare intervals; but in those genial days of autumn, when she has perfected her harvests and accomplished every needful thing that was given her to do, then she overflows with a blessed superfluity of love. She has leisure to caress her children now. It is good to be alive at such times. Thank Heaven for breath—yes, for mere breath—when it is made up of a heavenly breeze like this! It comes with a real kiss upon our cheeks; it would linger fondly around us if it might; but, since it must be gone, it embraces us with its whole kindly heart and passes onward to embrace likewise the next thing that it meets. A blessing is flung abroad and scattered far and wide over the earth, to be gathered up by all who choose. I recline upon the still unwithered grass and whisper to myself, "O perfect day! O beautiful world! O beneficent God!" And it is the promise of a blessed eternity; for our Creator would never have made such lovely days and have given us the deep hearts to enjoy them, above and beyond all thought, unless we were meant to be immortal. This sunshine is the golden pledge thereof. It beams through the gates of paradise and shows us glimpses far inward. 15 20 25

By and by, in a little time, the outward world puts on a drear austerity. On some October morning there is a heavy hoar-frost on the grass and along the tops of the fences; and at sunrise the leaves fall from the trees of our avenue without a breath of wind, quietly descending by their own weight. All summer long they have murmured like the noise of waters; they have roared loudly while the branches were wrestling with the thunder gust; they have made music both glad and solemn; they have attuned my thoughts by their quiet sound as I paced to and fro beneath the arch of intermingling boughs. Now they can only rustle under my feet. Henceforth the gray parsonage begins to assume a larger importance, and draws to its fireside,—for the abomination of the air-tight stove is reserved till wintry weather,—draws closer and closer to its fireside the vagrant impulses that had gone wandering about through the summer. 30 35 40

When summer was dead and buried the Old Manse became as lonely as a hermitage. Not that ever—in my time at least—it had been thronged with company; but, at no rare intervals, we welcomed some friend out of the dusty glare and tumult of the world, and rejoiced to share with him the transparent obscurity that was floating over us. In one respect our precincts were like the Enchanted Ground through which the pilgrim travelled on his way to the 45

Celestial City! The guests, each and all, felt a slumberous influence upon them; they fell asleep in chairs, or took a more deliberate siesta on the sofa, or were seen stretched among the shadows of the orchard, looking up dreamily through the boughs. They could not have paid a more acceptable compliment to my  
 5 abode, nor to my own qualities as a host. I held it as a proof that they left their cares behind them as they passed between the stone gate-posts at the entrance of our avenue, and that the so powerful opiate was the abundance of peace and quiet within and all around us. Others could give them pleasure and amusement or instruction—these could be picked up anywhere; but it was  
 10 for me to give them rest—rest in a life of trouble. What better could be done for those weary and world-worn spirits?—for him whose career of perpetual action was impeded and harassed by the rarest of his powers and the richest of his acquirements?—for another who had thrown his ardent heart from earliest youth into the strife of politics, and now, perchance, began to suspect  
 15 that one lifetime is too brief for the accomplishment of any lofty aim?—for her on whose feminine nature had been imposed the heavy gift of intellectual power, such as a strong man might have staggered under, and with it the necessity to act upon the world?—in a word, not to multiply instances, what better could be done for anybody who came within our magic circle than to  
 20 throw the spell of a tranquil spirit over him? And when it had wrought its full effect, then we dismissed him, with but misty reminiscences, as if he had been dreaming of us.

Were I to adopt a pet idea, as so many people do, and fondle it in my embraces to the exclusion of all others, it would be, that the great want which  
 25 mankind labors under at this present period is sleep. The world should recline its vast head on the first convenient pillow and take an age-long nap. It has gone distracted through a morbid activity, and, while preternaturally wide awake, is nevertheless tormented by visions that seem real to it now, but would assume their true aspect and character were all things once set right by an interval of sound repose. This is the only method of getting rid of old delusions  
 30 and avoiding new ones; of regenerating our race, so that it might in due time awake as an infant out of dewy slumber; of restoring to us the simple perception of what is right, and the single-hearted desire to achieve it, both of which have long been lost in consequence of this weary activity of brain and  
 35 torpor or passion of the heart that now afflict the universe. Stimulants, the only mode of treatment hitherto attempted, cannot quell the disease; they do but heighten the delirium.

Let not the above paragraph ever be quoted against the author; for, though tinctured with its modicum of truth, it is the result and expression of what he  
 40 knew, while he was writing, to be but a distorted survey of the state and prospects of mankind. There were circumstances around me which made it difficult to view the world precisely as it exists; for, severe and sober as was the Old Manse, it was necessary to go but a little way beyond its threshold before meet-

1. **Celestial City**—In Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* the shepherds warned Christian of the enchanted ground "whose air naturally tended to make one sleepy." 11. **him**—probably Horatio Bridge (born 1806), naval officer, whose *The Journal of an African Cruiser*, 1845, Hawthorne edited. 13. **another**—probably Franklin Pierce (1804-1869), later President of the United States. 16. **her**—probably Margaret Fuller (1810-1850).

ing with stranger moral shapes of men than might have been encountered elsewhere in a circuit of a thousand miles.

These hobgoblins of flesh and blood were attracted thither by the wide-spreading influence of a great original thinker, who had his earthly abode at the opposite extremity of our village. His mind acted upon other minds of a certain constitution with wonderful magnetism, and drew many men upon long pilgrimages to speak with him face to face. Young visionaries—to whom just so much of insight had been imparted as to make life all a labyrinth around them—came to seek the clew that should guide them out of their self-involved bewilderment. Grayheaded theorists—whose systems, at first air, had finally imprisoned them in an iron frame-work—travelled painfully to his door, not to ask deliverance, but to invite the free spirit into their own thraldom. People that had lighted on a new thought, or a thought that they fancied new, came to Emerson, as the finder of a glittering gem hastens to a lapidary, to ascertain its quality and value. Uncertain, troubled, earnest wanderers through the mid-night of the moral world beheld his intellectual fire as a beacon burning on a hill-top, and, climbing the difficult ascent, looked forth into the surrounding obscurity more hopefully than hitherto. The light revealed objects unseen before,—mountains, gleaming lakes, glimpses of a creation among the chaos; but, also, as was unavoidable, it attracted bats and owls and the whole host of night birds, which flapped their dusky wings against the gazer's eyes, and sometimes were mistaken for fowls of angelic feather. Such delusions always hover nigh whenever a beacon fire of truth is kindled.

For myself, there had been epochs of my life when I, too, might have asked of this prophet the master word that should solve me the riddle of the universe; but now, being happy, I felt as if there were no question to be put, and therefore admired Emerson as a poet of deep beauty and austere tenderness, but sought nothing from him as a philosopher. It was good, nevertheless, to meet him in the woodpaths, or sometimes in our avenue, with that pure intellectual gleam diffused about his presence like the garment of a shining one; and he so quiet, so simple, so without pretension, encountering each man alive as if expecting to receive more than he could impart. And, in truth, the heart of many an ordinary man had, perchance, inscriptions which he could not read. But it was impossible to dwell in his vicinity without inhaling more or less the mountain atmosphere of his lofty thought, which, in the brains of some people, wrought a singular giddiness,—new truth being as heady as new wine. Never was a poor little country village infested with such a variety of queer, strangely-dressed, oddly-behaved mortals, most of whom took upon themselves to be important agents of the world's destiny, yet were simply bores of a very intense water. Such, I imagine, is the invariable character of persons who crowd so closely about an original thinker as to draw in his unuttered breath and thus become imbued with a false originality. This triteness of novelty is enough to make any man of common sense blaspheme at all ideas of less than a century's standing, and pray that the world may be petrified and rendered immovable in precisely the worst moral and physical state that it ever yet arrived at, rather than be benefited by such schemes of such philosophers.

And now I begin to feel—and perhaps should have sooner felt—that we have

talked enough of the Old Manse. Mine honored reader, it may be, will vilify the poor author as an egotist for babbling through so many pages about a moss-grown country parsonage, and his life within its walls and on the river and in the woods, and the influences that wrought upon him from all these sources.

- 5 My conscience, however, does not reproach me with betraying anything too sacredly individual to be revealed by a human spirit to its brother or sister spirit. How narrow—how shallow and scanty too—is the stream of thought that has been flowing from my pen, compared with the broad tide of dim emotions, ideas, and associations which swell around me from that portion of my existence! How little have I told! and of that little, how almost nothing is even  
10 tintured with any quality that makes it exclusively my own! Has the reader gone wandering, hand in hand with me, through the inner passages of my being? and have we groped together into all its chambers and examined their treasures or their rubbish? Not so. We have been standing on the greensward,  
15 but just within the cavern's mouth, where the common sunshine is free to penetrate, and where every footstep is therefore free to come. I have appealed to no sentiment or sensibilities save such as are diffused among us all. So far as I am a man of really individual attributes I veil my face; nor am I, nor have I ever been, one of those supremely hospitable people who serve up their own  
20 hearts, delicately fried, with brain sauce, as a tidbit for their beloved public.

Glancing back over what I have written, it seems but the scattered reminiscences of a single summer. In fairyland there is no measurement of time; and, in a spot so sheltered from the turmoil of life's ocean, three years hastened away with a noiseless flight, as the breezy sunshine chases the cloud shadows  
25 across the depths of a still valley. Now came hints, growing more and more distinct, that the owner of the old house was pining for his native air. Carpenters next appeared, making a tremendous racket among the out-buildings, strewing the green grass with pine shavings and chips of chestnut joists, and vexing the whole antiquity of the place with their discordant renovations.  
30 Soon, moreover, they divested our abode of the veil of woodbine which had crept over a large portion of its southern face. All the aged mosses were cleared unsparingly away; and there were horrible whispers about brushing up the external walls with a coat of paint—a purpose as little to my taste as might be that of rouging the venerable cheeks of one's grandmother. But the hand that  
35 renovates is always more sacrilegious than that which destroys. In fine, we gathered up our household goods, drank a farewell cup of tea in our pleasant little breakfast room,—delicately fragrant tea, an unpurchasable luxury, one of the many angel gifts that had fallen like dew upon us,—and passed forth between the tall stone gateposts as uncertain as the wandering Arabs where our  
40 tent might next be pitched. Providence took me by the hand, and—an oddity of dispensation which, I trust, there is no irreverence in smiling at—has led me, as the newspapers announce while I am writing, from the Old Manse into a custom house. As a story teller, I have often contrived strange vicissitudes for my imaginary personages, but none like this.

- 45 The treasure of intellectual good which I hoped to find in our secluded

**43. custom house**—After four blissful years in the Old Manse, Hawthorne received in 1846 the position of surveyor in the Salem Custom House.

dwelling had never come to light. No profound treatise of ethics, no philosophic history, no novel even, that could stand unsupported on its edges. All that I had to show, as a man of letters, were these few tales and essays, which had blossomed out like flowers in the calm summer of my heart and mind. Save editing (an easy task) the journal of my friend of many years, the African Cruiser, I had done nothing else. With these idle weeds and withering blossoms I have intermixed some that were produced long ago,—old, faded things, reminding me of flowers pressed between the leaves of a book,—and now offer the bouquet, such as it is, to any whom it may please. These fitful sketches, with so little of external life about them, yet claiming no profundity of purpose,—so reserved, even while they sometimes seem so frank,—often but half in earnest, and never, even when most so, expressing satisfactorily the thoughts which they profess to image,—such trifles, I truly feel, afford no solid basis for a literary reputation. Nevertheless, the public—if my limited number of readers, whom I venture to regard rather as a circle of friends, may be termed a public—will receive them the more kindly, as the last offering, the last collection, of this nature which it is my purpose ever to put forth. Unless I could do better, I have done enough in this kind. For myself the book will always retain one charm—as reminding me of the river, with its delightful solitudes, and of the avenue, the garden, and the orchard, and especially the dear old Manse, with the little study on its western side, and the sunshine glimmering through the willow branches while I wrote.

Let the reader, if he will do me so much honor, imagine himself my guest, and that, having seen whatever may be worthy of notice within and about the Old Manse, he has finally been ushered into my study. There, after seating him in an antique elbow chair, an heirloom of the house, I take forth a roll of manuscript and entreat his attention to the following tales—an act of personal inhospitality, however, which I never was guilty of, nor ever will be, even to my worst enemy.

### ETHAN BRAND

Published in the *Boston Museum*, January 5, 1850, and in the *Dollar Magazine*, May, 1850, and collected in *The Snow-Image and Other Tales* (1851). Hawthorne recorded in *Passages from the American Note-Books* detailed descriptions of the limekiln, the one-armed soap-maker, the German and his diorama, and the dog, all seen in the course of a holiday excursion to North Adams, Massachusetts, July 26 to September 9, 1838.

**B**ARTRAM the lime-burner, a rough, heavy-looking man, begrimed with charcoal, sat watching his kiln at nightfall, while his little son played at building houses with the scattered fragments of marble, when, on the hill-side below them, they heard a roar of laughter, not mirthful, but slow, and even solemn, like a wind shaking the boughs of the forest.

"Father, what is that?" asked the little boy, leaving his play, and pressing betwixt his father's knees.

"Oh, some drunken man, I suppose," answered the lime-burner; "some



merry fellow from the bar-room in the village, who dared not laugh loud enough within doors lest he should blow the roof of the house off. So here he is, shaking his jolly sides at the foot of Graylock."

"But, father," said the child, more sensitive than the obtuse, middle-aged clown, "he does not laugh like a man that is glad. So the noise frightens me!"

"Don't be a fool, child!" cried his father, gruffly. "You will never make a man, I do believe; there is too much of your mother in you. I have known the rustling of a leaf startle you. Hark! Here comes the merry fellow now. You shall see that there is no harm in him."

10 Bartram and his little son, while they were talking thus, sat watching the same lime-kiln that had been the scene of Ethan Brand's solitary and meditative life, before he began his search for the Unpardonable Sin. Many years, as we have seen, had now elapsed, since that portentous night when the IDEA  
15 was first developed. The kiln, however, on the mountain-side, stood unimpaired, and was in nothing changed since he had thrown his dark thoughts into the intense glow of its furnace, and melted them, as it were, into the one thought that took possession of his life. It was a rude, round, tower-like structure about twenty feet high, heavily built of rough stones, and with a hillock  
20 of earth heaped about the larger part of its circumference; so that the blocks and fragments of marble might be drawn by cart-loads, and thrown in at the top. There was an opening at the bottom of the tower, like an oven-mouth, but large enough to admit a man in a stooping posture, and provided with a massive iron door. With the smoke and jets of flame issuing from the chinks and crevices of this door, which seemed to give admittance into the hill-side, it  
25 resembled nothing so much as the private entrance to the infernal regions, which the shepherds of the Delectable Mountains were accustomed to show to pilgrims.

There are many such lime-kilns in that tract of country, for the purpose of burning the white marble which composes a large part of the substance of the  
30 hills. Some of them, built years ago, and long deserted, with weeds growing in the vacant round of the interior, which is open to the sky, and grass and wild-flowers rooting themselves into the chinks of the stones, look already like relics of antiquity, and may yet be overspread with the lichens of centuries to come. Others, where the lime-burner still feeds his daily and night-long fire,  
35 afford points of interest to the wanderer among the hills, who seats himself on a log of wood or a fragment of marble, to hold a chat with the solitary man. It is a lonesome, and, when the character is inclined to thought, may be an intensely thoughtful occupation; as it proved in the case of Ethan Brand, who had mused to such strange purpose, in days gone by, while the fire in this  
40 very kiln was burning.

The man who now watched the fire was of a different order, and troubled himself with no thoughts save the very few that were requisite to his business. At frequent intervals, he flung back the clashing weight of the iron door, and, turning his face from the insufferable glare, thrust in huge logs of oak, or

3. **Graylock**—Mt. Greylock, or Saddle Mountain, in the Berkshires, the highest mountain in Massachusetts. 26. **Delectable Mountains**—the range of mountains in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, from which Christian first sees the Celestial City.

stirred the immense brands with a long pole. Within the furnace were seen the curling and riotous flames, and the burning marble, almost molten with the intensity of heat; while without, the reflection of the fire quivered on the dark intricacy of the surrounding forest, and showed in the foreground a bright and ruddy little picture of the hut, the spring beside its door, the athletic and coal-begrimed figure of the lime-burner, and the half-frightened child, shrinking into the protection of his father's shadow. And when, again, the iron door was closed, then reappeared the tender light of the half-full moon, which vainly strove to trace out the indistinct shapes of the neighboring mountains; and, in the upper sky, there was a flitting congregation of clouds, still faintly tinged with the rosy sunset, though thus far down into the valley the sunshine had vanished long and long ago. 5 10

The little boy now crept still closer to his father, as footsteps were heard ascending the hill-side, and a human form thrust aside the bushes that clustered beneath the trees. 15

"Halloo! who is it?" cried the lime-burner, vexed at his son's timidity, yet half infected by it. "Come forward, and show yourself, like a man, or I'll fling this chunk of marble at your head!"

"You offer me a rough welcome," said a gloomy voice, as the unknown man drew nigh. "Yet I neither claim nor desire a kinder one, even at my own fire-side." 20

To obtain a distincter view, Bartram threw open the iron door of the kiln, whence immediately issued a gush of fierce light, that smote full upon the stranger's face and figure. To a careless eye there appeared nothing very remarkable in his aspect, which was that of a man in a coarse, brown, country-made suit of clothes, tall and thin, with the staff and heavy shoes of a wayfarer. As he advanced, he fixed his eyes—which were very bright—intently upon the brightness of the furnace, as if he beheld, or expected to behold, some object worthy of note within it. 25

"Good evening, stranger," said the lime-burner; "whence come you, so late in the day?" 30

"I come from my search," answered the wayfarer; "for, at last, it is finished."

"Drunk!—or crazy!" muttered Bartram to himself. "I shall have trouble with the fellow. The sooner I drive him away, the better." 35

The little boy, all in a tremble, whispered to his father, and begged him to shut the door of the kiln, so that there might not be so much light; for that there was something in the man's face which he was afraid to look at, yet could not look away from. And, indeed, even the lime-burner's dull and torpid sense began to be impressed by an indescribable something in that thin, rugged, thoughtful visage, with the grizzled hair hanging wildly about it, and those deeply sunken eyes, which gleamed like fires within the entrance of a mysterious cavern. But, as he closed the door, the stranger turned towards him, and spoke in a quiet, familiar way, that made Bartram feel as if he were a sane and sensible man, after all. 40 45

"Your task draws to an end, I see," said he. "This marble has already been burning three days. A few hours more will convert the stone to lime."

"Why, who are you?" exclaimed the lime-burner. "You seem as well acquainted with my business as I am myself."

"And well I may be," said the stranger; "for I followed the same craft many a long year, and here, too, on this very spot. But you are a new-comer in these  
5 parts. Did you never hear of Ethan Brand?"

"The man that went in search of the Unpardonable Sin?" asked Bartram, with a laugh.

"The same," answered the stranger. "He has found what he sought, and therefore he comes back again."

10 "What! then you are Ethan Brand himself?" cried the lime-burner, in amazement. "I am a new-comer here, as you say, and they call it eighteen years since you left the foot of Graylock. But, I can tell you, the good folks still talk about Ethan Brand, in the village yonder, and what a strange errand took him away from his lime-kiln. Well, and so you have found the Unpardonable Sin?"

15 "Even so!" said the stranger, calmly.

"If the question is a fair one," proceeded Bartram, "where might it be?"

Ethan Brand laid his finger on his own heart.

"Here!" replied he.

And then, without mirth in his countenance, but as if moved by an involuntary  
20 recognition of the infinite absurdity of seeking throughout the world for what was the closest of all things to himself, and looking into every heart, save his own, for what was hidden in no other breast, he broke into a laugh of scorn. It was the same slow, heavy laugh, that had almost appalled the lime-burner when it heralded the wayfarer's approach.

25 The solitary mountain-side was made dismal by it. Laughter, when out of place, mistimed, or bursting forth from a disordered state of feeling, may be the most terrible modulation of the human voice. The laughter of one asleep, even if it be a little child,—the madman's laugh,—the wild, screaming laugh of a born idiot,—are sounds that we sometimes tremble to hear, and would always  
30 willingly forget. Poets have imagined no utterance of fiends or hobgoblins so fearfully appropriate as a laugh. And even the obtuse lime-burner felt his nerves shaken, as this strange man looked inward at his own heart, and burst into laughter that rolled away into the night, and was indistinctly reverberated among the hills.

35 "Joe," said he to his little son, "scamper down to the tavern in the village, and tell the jolly fellows there that Ethan Brand has come back, and that he has found the Unpardonable Sin!"

The boy darted away on his errand, to which Ethan Brand made no objection, nor seemed hardly to notice it. He sat on a log of wood, looking steadily  
40 at the iron door of the kiln. When the child was out of sight, and his swift and light footsteps ceased to be heard treading first on the fallen leaves and then on the rocky mountain-path, the lime-burner began to regret his departure. He felt that the little fellow's presence had been a barrier between his guest and himself, and that he must now deal, heart to heart, with a man who,  
45 on his own confession, had committed the one only crime for which Heaven could afford no mercy. That crime, in its indistinct blackness, seemed to overshadow him. The lime-burner's own sins rose up within him, and made his

memory riotous with a throng of evil shapes that asserted their kindred with the Master Sin, whatever it might be, which it was within the scope of man's corrupted nature to conceive and cherish. They were all of one family; they went to and fro between his breast and Ethan Brand's, and carried dark greetings from one to the other.

Then Bartram remembered the stories which had grown traditionary in reference to this strange man, who had come upon him like a shadow of the night, and was making himself at home in his old place, after so long absence, that the dead people, dead and buried for years, would have had more right to be at home, in any familiar spot, than he. Ethan Brand, it was said, had conversed with Satan himself in the lurid blaze of this very kiln. The legend had been matter of mirth heretofore, but looked grisly now. According to this tale, before Ethan Brand departed on his search, he had been accustomed to evoke a fiend from the hot furnace of the lime-kiln, night after night, in order to confer with him about the Unpardonable Sin; the man and the fiend each laboring to frame the image of some mode of guilt which could neither be atoned for nor forgiven. And, with the first gleam of light upon the mountain-top, the fiend crept in at the iron door, there to abide the intensest element of fire until again summoned forth to share in the dreadful task of extending man's possible guilt beyond the scope of Heaven's else infinite mercy.

While the lime-burner was struggling with the horror of these thoughts, Ethan Brand rose from the log, and flung open the door of the kiln. The action was in such accordance with the idea in Bartram's mind, that he almost expected to see the Evil One issue forth, red-hot, from the raging furnace.

"Hold! hold!" cried he, with a tremulous attempt to laugh; for he was ashamed of his fears, although they overmastered him. "Don't, for mercy's sake, bring out your Devil now!"

"Man!" sternly replied Ethan Brand, "what need have I of the Devil? I have left him behind me, on my track. It is with such half-way sinners as you that he busies himself. Fear not, because I open the door. I do but act by old custom, and am going to trim your fire, like a lime-burner, as I was once."

He stirred the vast coals, thrust in more wood, and bent forward to gaze into the hollow prison-house of the fire, regardless of the fierce glow that reddened upon his face. The lime-burner sat watching him, and half suspected this strange guest of a purpose, if not to evoke a fiend, at least to plunge bodily into the flames, and thus vanish from the sight of man. Ethan Brand, however, drew quietly back, and closed the door of the kiln.

"I have looked," said he, "into many a human heart that was seven times hotter with sinful passions than yonder furnace is with fire. But I found not there what I sought. No, not the Unpardonable Sin!"

"What is the Unpardonable Sin?" asked the lime-burner; and then he shrank farther from his companion, trembling lest his question should be answered.

"It is a sin that grew within my own breast," replied Ethan Brand, standing erect, with a pride that distinguishes all enthusiasts of his stamp. "A sin that grew nowhere else! The sin of an intellect that triumphed over the sense of brotherhood with man and reverence for God, and sacrificed everything to its own mighty claims! The only sin that deserves a recompense of immortal

agony! Freely, were it to do again, would I incur the guilt. Unshrinkingly I accept the retribution!"

"The man's head is turned," muttered the lime-burner to himself. "He may be a sinner like the rest of us,—nothing more likely,—but, I'll be sworn, he is  
5 a madman too."

Nevertheless, he felt uncomfortable at his situation, alone with Ethan Brand on the wild mountain-side, and was right glad to hear the rough murmur of tongues, and the footsteps of what seemed a pretty numerous party, stumbling over the stones and rustling through the underbrush. Soon appeared the whole  
10 lazy regiment that was wont to infest the village tavern, comprehending three or four individuals who had drunk flip beside the bar-room fire through all the winters, and smoked their pipes beneath the stoop through all the summers, since Ethan Brand's departure. Laughing boisterously, and mingling all their voices together in unceremonious talk, they now burst into the moonshine  
15 and narrow streaks of firelight that illuminated the open space before the lime-kiln. Bartram set the door ajar again, flooding the spot with light, that the whole company might get a fair view of Ethan Brand, and he of them.

There, among other old acquaintances, was a once ubiquitous man, now almost extinct, but whom we were formerly sure to encounter at the hotel of  
20 every thriving village throughout the country. It was the stage-agent. The present specimen of the genus was a wilted and smoke-dried man, wrinkled and red-nosed, in a smartly cut, brown, bob-tailed coat, with brass buttons, who, for a length of time unknown, had kept his desk and corner in the bar-room, and was still puffing what seemed to be the same cigar that he had lighted  
25 twenty years before. He had great fame as a dry joker, though, perhaps, less on account of any intrinsic humor than from a certain flavor of brandy-toddy and tobacco-smoke, which impregnated all his ideas and expressions, as well as his person. Another well-remembered, though strangely altered, face was that of Lawyer Giles, as people still called him in courtesy; an elderly ragamuffin, in  
30 his soiled shirt-sleeves and tow-cloth trousers. This poor fellow had been an attorney, in what he called his better days, a sharp practitioner, and in great vogue among the village litigants; but flip, and sling, and toddy, and cocktails, imbibed at all hours, morning, noon, and night, had caused him to slide from intellectual to various kinds and degrees of bodily labor, till at last, to adopt  
35 his own phrase, he slid into a soap-vat. In other words, Giles was now a soap-boiler, in a small way. He had come to be but the fragment of a human being, a part of one foot having been chopped off by an axe, and an entire hand torn away by the devilish grip of a steam-engine. Yet, though the corporeal hand was gone, a spiritual member remained; for, stretching forth the stump, Giles  
40 steadfastly averred that he felt an invisible thumb and fingers with as vivid a sensation as before the real ones were amputated. A maimed and miserable wretch he was; but one, nevertheless, whom the world could not trample on, and had no right to scorn, either in this or any previous stage of his misfortunes, since he had still kept up the courage and spirit of a man, asked nothing  
45 in charity, and with his one hand—and that the left one—fought a stern battle against want and hostile circumstances.

Among the throng, too, came another personage, who, with certain points

of similarity to Lawyer Giles, had many more of difference. It was the village doctor; a man of some fifty years, whom, at an earlier period of his life, we introduced as paying a professional visit to Ethan Brand during the latter's supposed insanity. He was now a purple-visaged, rude, and brutal, yet half-gentlemanly figure, with something wild, ruined, and desperate in his talk, and in all the details of his gesture and manners. Brandy possessed this man like an evil spirit, and made him as surly and savage as a wild beast, and as miserable as a lost soul; but there was supposed to be in him such wonderful skill, such native gifts of healing, beyond any which medical science could impart, that society caught hold of him, and would not let him sink out of its reach. So, swaying to and fro upon his horse, and grumbling thick accents at the bedside, he visited all the sick-chambers for miles about among the mountain towns, and sometimes raised a dying man, as it were, by miracle, or quite as often, no doubt, sent his patient to a grave that was dug many a year too soon. The doctor had an everlasting pipe in his mouth, and, as somebody said, in allusion to his habit of swearing, it was always alight with hell-fire.

These three worthies pressed forward, and greeted Ethan Brand each after his own fashion, earnestly inviting him to partake of the contents of a certain black bottle, in which, as they averred, he would find something far better worth seeking for than the Unpardonable Sin. No mind, which has wrought itself by intense and solitary meditation into a high state of enthusiasm, can endure the kind of contact with low and vulgar modes of thought and feeling to which Ethan Brand was now subjected. It made him doubt—and, strange to say, it was a painful doubt—whether he had indeed found the Unpardonable Sin, and found it within himself. The whole question on which he had exhausted life, and more than life, looked like a delusion.

"Leave me," he said bitterly, "ye brute beasts, that have made yourselves so, shrivelling up your souls with fiery liquors! I have done with you. Years and years ago, I groped into your hearts and found nothing there for my purpose. Get ye gone!"

"Why, you uncivil scoundrel," cried the fierce doctor, "is that the way you respond to the kindness of your best friends? Then let me tell you the truth. You have no more found the Unpardonable Sin than yonder boy Joe has. You are but a crazy fellow,—I told you so twenty years ago,—neither better nor worse than a crazy fellow, and the fit companion of old Humphrey, here!"

He pointed to an old man, shabbily dressed, with long white hair, thin visage, and unsteady eyes. For some years past this aged person had been wandering about among the hills, inquiring of all travelers whom he met for his daughter. The girl, it seemed, had gone off with a company of circus-performers, and occasionally tidings of her came to the village, and fine stories were told of her glittering appearance as she rode on horseback in the ring, or performed marvelous feats on the tight-rope.

The white-haired father now approached Ethan Brand, and gazed unsteadily into his face.

"They tell me you have been all over the earth," said he, wringing his hands with earnestness. "You must have seen my daughter, for she makes a grand

figure in the world, and everybody goes to see her. Did she send any word to her old father, or say when she was coming back?"

Ethan Brand's eye quailed beneath the old man's. That daughter, from whom he so earnestly desired a word of greeting, was the Esther of our tale, the very girl whom, with such cold and remorseless purpose, Ethan Brand had made the subject of a psychological experiment, and wasted, absorbed, and perhaps annihilated her soul, in the process.

"Yes," murmured he, turning away from the hoary wanderer, "it is no delusion. There is an Unpardonable Sin!"

While these things were passing, a merry scene was going forward in the area of cheerful light, beside the spring and before the door of the hut. A number of the youth of the village, young men and girls, had hurried up the hill-side, impelled by curiosity to see Ethan Brand, the hero of so many a legend familiar to their childhood. Finding nothing, however, very remarkable in his aspect,—nothing but a sunburnt wayfarer, in plain garb and dusty shoes, who sat looking into the fire as if he fancied pictures among the coals,—these young people speedily grew tired of observing him. As it happened, there was other amusement at hand. An old German Jew, traveling with a ~~diorama~~ on his back, was passing down the mountain-road towards the village just as the party turned aside from it, and, in hopes of eking out the profits of the day, the showman had kept them company to the lime-kiln.

"Come, old Dutchman," cried one of the young men, "let us see your pictures, if you can swear they are worth looking at!"

"Oh yes, Captain," answered the Jew,—whether as a matter of courtesy or craft, he styled everybody Captain,—"I shall show you, indeed, some very superb pictures!"

So, placing his box in a proper position, he invited the young men and girls to look through the glass orifices of the machine, and proceeded to exhibit a series of the most outrageous scratchings and daubings, as specimens of the fine arts, that ever an itinerant showman had the face to impose upon his circle of spectators. The pictures were worn out, moreover, tattered, full of cracks and wrinkles, dingy with tobacco-smoke, and otherwise in a most pitiable condition. Some purported to be cities, public edifices, and ruined castles in Europe; others represented Napoleon's battles and Nelson's sea-fights; and in the midst of these would be seen a gigantic, brown, hairy hand,—which might have been mistaken for the Hand of Destiny, though, in truth, it was only the showman's,—pointing its forefinger to various scenes of the conflict, while its owner gave historical illustrations. When, with much merriment at its abominable deficiency of merit, the exhibition was concluded, the German bade little Joe put his head into the box. Viewed through the magnifying-glasses, the boy's round, rosy visage assumed the strangest imaginable aspect of an immense Titanic child, the mouth grinning broadly, and the eyes and every other feature overflowing with fun at the joke. Suddenly, however, that merry face turned pale, and its expression changed to horror, for this easily impressed and excitable child had become sensible that the eye of Ethan Brand was fixed upon him through the glass.

"You make the little man to be afraid, Captain," said the German Jew, turn-

ing up the dark and strong outline of his visage from his stooping posture. "But look again, and, by chance, I shall cause you to see somewhat that is very fine, upon my word!"

Ethan Brand gazed into the box for an instant, and then starting back, looked fixedly at the German. What had he seen? Nothing, apparently; for a curious youth, who had peeped in almost at the same moment, beheld only a vacant space of canvas. 5

"I remember you now," muttered Ethan Brand to the showman.

"Ah, Captain," whispered the Jew of Nuremberg, with a dark smile, "I find it to be a heavy matter in my show-box,—this Unpardonable Sin! By my faith, Captain, it has wearied my shoulders, this long day, to carry it over the mountain." 10

"Peace," answered Ethan Brand, sternly, "or get thee into the furnace yonder!"

The Jew's exhibition had scarcely concluded, when a great, elderly dog—who seemed to be his own master, as no person in the company laid claim to him—saw fit to render himself the object of public notice. Hitherto, he had shown himself a very quiet, well-disposed old dog, going round from one to another, and, by way of being sociable, offering his rough head to be patted by any kindly hand that would take so much trouble. But now, all of a sudden, this grave and venerable quadruped, of his own mere motion, and without the slightest suggestion from anybody else, began to run round after his tail, which, to heighten the absurdity of the proceeding, was a great deal shorter than it should have been. Never was seen such headlong eagerness in pursuit of an object that could not possibly be attained; never was heard such a tremendous outbreak of growling, snarling, barking, and snapping,—as if one end of the ridiculous brute's body were at deadly and most unforgivable enmity with the other. Faster and faster, round about went the cur; and faster and still faster fled the unapproachable brevity of his tail; and louder and fiercer grew his yells of rage and animosity; until, utterly exhausted, and as far from the goal as ever, the foolish old dog ceased his performance as suddenly as he had begun it. The next moment he was as mild, quiet, sensible, and respectable in his deportment, as when he first scraped acquaintance with the company. 15 20 25 30

As may be supposed, the exhibition was greeted with universal laughter, clapping of hands, and shouts of encore, to which the canine performer responded by wagging all that there was to wag of his tail, but appeared totally unable to repeat his very successful effort to amuse the spectators. 35

Meanwhile, Ethan Brand had resumed his seat upon the log, and moved, it might be, by a perception of some remote analogy between his own case and that of this self-pursuing cur, he broke into the awful laugh, which, more than any other token, expressed the condition of his inward being. From that moment, the merriment of the party was at an end; they stood aghast, dreading lest the inauspicious sound should be reverberated around the horizon, and that mountain would thunder it to mountain, and so the horror be prolonged upon their ears. Then, whispering one to another that it was late,—that the moon was almost down,—that the August night was growing chill,—they hurried homewards, leaving the lime-burner and little Joe to deal as they might 40 45



with their unwelcome guest. Save for these three human beings, the open space on the hill-side was a solitude, set in a vast gloom of forest. Beyond that dark-some verge, the firelight glimmered on the stately trunks and almost black foliage of pines, intermixed with the lighter verdure of sapling oaks, maples, and poplars, while here and there lay the gigantic corpses of dead trees, decaying on the leaf-strewn soil. And it seemed to little Joe—a timorous and imaginative child—that the silent forest was holding its breath until some fearful thing should happen.

10 Ethan Brand thrust more wood into the fire, and closed the door of the kiln; then looking over his shoulder at the lime-burner and his son, he bade, rather than advised, them to retire to rest.

“For myself, I cannot sleep,” said he. “I have matters that it concerns me to meditate upon. I will watch the fire, as I used to do in the old time.”

15 “And call the Devil out of the furnace to keep you company, I suppose,” muttered Bartram, who had been making intimate acquaintance with the black bottle above mentioned. “But watch, if you like, and call as many devils as you like! For my part, I shall be all the better for a snooze. Come, Joel!”

As the boy followed his father into the hut, he looked back at the wayfarer, and the tears came into his eyes, for his tender spirit had an intuition of the 20 bleak and terrible loneliness in which this man had enveloped himself.

When they had gone, Ethan Brand sat listening to the crackling of the kindled wood, and looking at the little spirts of fire that issued through the chinks of the door. These trifles, however, once so familiar, had but the slightest hold of his attention, while deep within his mind he was reviewing the gradual but 25 marvelous change that had been wrought upon him by the search to which he had devoted himself. He remembered how the night dew had fallen upon him,—how the dark forest had whispered to him,—how the stars had gleamed upon him,—a simple and loving man, watching his fire in the years gone by, and ever musing as it burned. He remembered with what tenderness, with what 30 love and sympathy for mankind, and what pity for human guilt and woe, he had first begun to contemplate those ideas which afterwards became the inspiration of his life; with what reverence he had then looked into the heart of man, viewing it as a temple originally divine, and, however desecrated, still to be held sacred by a brother; with what awful fear he had deprecated the 35 success of his pursuit, and prayed that the Unpardonable Sin might never be revealed to him. Then ensued that vast intellectual development, which, in its progress, disturbed the counterpoise between his mind and heart. The Idea that possessed his life had operated as a means of education; it had gone on cultivating his powers to the highest point of which they were susceptible; it 40 had raised him from the level of an unlettered laborer to stand on a star-lit eminence, whither the philosophers of the earth, laden with the lore of universities, might vainly strive to clamber after him. So much for the intellect! But where was the heart? That, indeed, had withered,—had contracted,—had hardened,—had perished! It had ceased to partake of the universal throb. 45 He had lost his hold of the magnetic chain of humanity. He was no longer a brother-man, opening the chambers or the dungeons of our common nature by the key of holy sympathy, which gave him a right to share in all its secrets; he

was now a cold observer, looking on mankind as the subject of his experiment, and, at length, converting man and woman to be his puppets, and pulling the wires that moved them to such degrees of crime as were demanded for his study.

Thus Ethan Brand became a fiend. He began to be so from the moment that his moral nature had ceased to keep the pace of improvement with his intellect. And now, as his highest effort and inevitable development,—as the bright and gorgeous flower, and rich, delicious fruit of his life's labor,—he had produced the Unpardonable Sin!

"What more have I to seek? what more to achieve?" said Ethan Brand to himself. "My task is done, and well done!"

Starting from the log with a certain alacrity in his gait and ascending the hillock of earth that was raised against the stone circumference of the lime-kiln, he thus reached the top of the structure. It was a space of perhaps ten feet across, from edge to edge, presenting a view of the upper surface of the immense mass of broken marble with which the kiln was heaped. All these innumerable blocks and fragments of marble were red-hot and vividly on fire, sending up great spouts of blue flame, which quivered aloft and danced madly, as within a magic circle, and sank and rose again, with continual and multitudinous activity. As the lonely man bent forward over this terrible body of fire, the blasting heat smote up against his person with a breath that, it might be supposed, would have scorched and shrivelled him up in a moment.

Ethan Brand stood erect, and raised his arms on high. The blue flames played upon his face, and imparted the wild and ghastly light which alone could have suited its expression; it was that of a fiend on the verge of plunging into his gulf of intensest torment.

"O Mother Earth," cried he, "who art no more my Mother, and into whose bosom this frame shall never be resolved! O mankind, whose brotherhood I have cast off, and trampled thy great heart beneath my feet! O stars of heaven, that shone on me of old, as if to light me onward and upward!—farewell all, and forever. Come, deadly element of Fire,—henceforth my familiar friend! Embrace me, as I do thee!"

That night the sound of a fearful peal of laughter rolled heavily through the sleep of the lime-burner and his little son; dim shapes of horror and anguish haunted their dreams, and seemed still present in the rude hovel, when they opened their eyes to the daylight.

"Up, boy, up!" cried the lime-burner, staring about him. "Thank Heaven, the night is gone, at last; and rather than pass such another, I would watch my lime-kiln, wide awake, for a twelvemonth. This Ethan Brand, with his humbug of an Unpardonable Sin, has done me no such mighty favor, in taking my place!"

He issued from the hut, followed by little Joe, who kept fast hold of his father's hand. The early sunshine was already pouring its gold upon the mountain-tops, and though the valleys were still in shadow, they smiled cheerfully in the promise of the bright day that was hastening onward. The village, completely shut in by hills, which swelled away gently about it, looked as if

it had rested peacefully in the hollow of the great hand of Providence. Every dwelling was distinctly visible; the little spires of the two churches pointed upwards, and caught a fore-glimmering of brightness from the sun-gilt skies upon their gilded weathercocks. The tavern was astir, and the figure of the old, smoke-dried stage-agent, cigar in mouth, was seen beneath the stoop. Old Graylock was glorified with a golden cloud upon his head. Scattered likewise over the breasts of the surrounding mountains, there were heaps of hoary mist, in fantastic shapes, some of them far down into the valley, others high up towards the summits, and still others, of the same family of mist or cloud, hovering in the gold radiance of the upper atmosphere. Stepping from one to another of the clouds that rested on the hills, and thence to the loftier brotherhood that sailed in air, it seemed almost as if a mortal man might thus ascend into the heavenly regions. Earth was so mingled with sky that it was a day-dream to look at it.

To supply that charm of the familiar and homely, which Nature so readily adopts into a scene like this, the stage-coach was rattling down the mountain-road, and the driver sounded his horn, while Echo caught up the notes, and intertwined them into a rich and varied and elaborate harmony, of which the original performer could lay claim to little share. The great hills played a concert among themselves, each contributing a strain of airy sweetness.

Little Joe's face brightened at once.

"Dear father," cried he, skipping cheerily to and fro, "that strange man is gone, and the sky and the mountains all seem glad of it!"

"Yes," growled the lime-burner, with an oath, "but he has let the fire go down, and no thanks to him if five hundred bushels of lime are not spoiled. If I catch the fellow hereabouts again, I shall feel like tossing him into the furnace!"

With his long pole in his hand, he ascended to the top of the kiln. After a moment's pause, he called to his son.

"Come up here, Joe!" said he.

So little Joe ran up the hillock, and stood by his father's side. The marble was all burnt into perfect, snow-white lime. But on its surface, in the midst of the circle,—snow-white too, and thoroughly converted into lime,—lay a human skeleton, in the attitude of a person who, after long toil, lies down to long repose. Within the ribs—strange to say—was the shape of a human heart.

"Was the fellow's heart made of marble?" cried Bartram, in some perplexity at this phenomenon. "At any rate, it is burnt into what looks like special good lime; and, taking all the bones together, my kiln is half a bushel the richer for him."

So saying, the rude lime-burner lifted his pole, and, letting it fall upon the skeleton, the relics of Ethan Brand were crumbled into fragments.

# HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

1807-1882

## I. ATHIRST FOR "FUTURE EMINENCE IN LITERATURE" (1807-1835)

- 1807 Born February 27, in Portland, Maine, the second child of Stephen and Zilpah Wadsworth Longfellow.
- 1810-1821 Attended private schools, principally the Portland Academy.
- 1820 First poem appeared in the (Portland) *Gazette of Maine* November 17, the title being "The Battle of Lovell's Pond."
- 1821 Passed entrance examinations for Bowdoin College, but pursued freshman studies at home.
- 1822-1825 Student at Bowdoin College, contributing poems and essays to various newspapers and periodicals. "The fact is . . . I most eagerly aspire after future eminence in literature." Graduated in September, 1825.
- 1825 Offered professorship of modern languages at Bowdoin on condition that he visit Europe.
- 1826-1829 Left New York May 15, 1826, visiting France, Spain, Italy, Germany, and England, returning home August 11, 1829.
- 1829-1835 Professor of modern languages and librarian of Bowdoin College; edited textbooks; contributed articles to the *North American Review* on European literatures.
- 1831 Married Mary Storer Potter of Portland September 14. Contributed essays to the *New England Magazine* (1831-33), which, revised, appear in *Outre-Mer* (1833-34; final form, 1835).
- 1834 Offered Smith professorship of modern languages at Harvard in succession to George Ticknor with the privilege of preparing himself by a trip to Europe "for the purpose of a more perfect attainment of the German."

## II. PROFESSOR, POET, AND NATIONAL FIGURE (1835-1854)

- 1835-1836 Sailed in April, 1835, with his wife; visited England, Scandinavia, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, and France. Mrs. Longfellow died in Rotterdam November 29, 1835.
- 1836 Entered upon his professorial duties at Harvard in December, living at Craigie House, Cambridge, after August, 1837. Formation of the "Five of Clubs" group. Intimacy with Hawthorne begun.
- 1839 Published *Hyperion: A Romance* (prose); and *Voices of the Night* (poetry), the latter in December. Continued to contribute to the *North American Review*. Poe's attacks on Longfellow began with a review of *Hyperion* in October in *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*.
- 1841 Published *Ballads and Other Poems* December 19 (title-page dated 1842).
- 1842 Obtained leave of absence because of ill health and visited Belgium, the Rhine

- and England, returning in December and writing the *Poems on Slavery* (1842), which aroused controversy, on the return voyage.
- 1843 Married Frances Elizabeth Appleton July 13, and became owner of Craigie House. Published *The Spanish Student* (closet drama) in the summer.
- 1845-1847 Much editorial work: *The Waif: A Collection of Poems* (1845); *The Poets and Poetry of Europe* (1845); *The Estray: A Collection of Poems* (1847). Published *The Belfry of Bruges and Other Poems* (December 23, 1845).
- 1847 Published *Evangeline, A Tale of Acadie* October 30. Longfellow now definitely a great national figure.
- 1849 Published *Kavanagh, a Tale* (prose) and *The Seaside and the Fireside*, which includes "The Building of the Ship." An increasing dissatisfaction with teaching went hand in hand with a keen interest in national politics, reflected in this poem.
- 1854 Resigned his professorship, James Russell Lowell being his successor.

### III. "THE WHITE MR. LONGFELLOW" (1854-1882)

- 1855 Published *The Song of Hiawatha* November 10. Longfellow now internationally famous.
- 1857 Published *Drift Wood* (essays). Became a member of the Saturday Club.
- 1858 Published *The Courtship of Miles Standish and Other Poems* in September.
- 1859 Received an LL.D. degree from Harvard College.
- 1861 Mrs. Longfellow died of burns July 9. Longfellow presently resumed work on his translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy* (published 1865-69) to forget his loss.
- 1863 First part of *Tales of a Wayside Inn* published November 25; part two appeared in *Three Books of Song* (1872); part three in *Aftermath* (1873).
- 1866 *Flower-de-Luce* published.
- 1868-1869 Last visit to Europe, principally England, France, and Italy, Longfellow receiving honorary degrees from Cambridge and Oxford in 1868. Returned to America about September 1, 1869.
- 1872 Completed *Christus: A Mystery*, which he regarded as the principal work of his career (*The Golden Legend* first appeared in 1851; *The New England Tragedies* in 1868; and *The Divine Tragedy* in 1871). *Three Books of Song* published. Longfellow now a patriarchal poet.
- 1873-1880 Quietly and peacefully at work as a poet and editor, publishing *Aftermath* (1873); *The Hanging of the Crane* (1874); *The Masque of Pandora, and Other Poems* (1875); *Poems of Places* (1876-79), an anthology in 31 vols.; *Kéramos and Other Poems* (1878; privately printed, 1877); *The White Czar and Other Poems* (1878); *Ultima Thule* (1880).
- 1882 *In the Harbor* (second part of *Ultima Thule*) appeared. Longfellow died March 24.
- 1883 *Michael Angelo* posthumously published.

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*Complete Poetical and Prose Works of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, Houghton Mifflin, 1886, 11 vols. (Riverside edition); *Complete Poetical and Prose Works of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, ed. by H. E. Scudder, Houghton Mifflin, 1893 (Cambridge edition). *Longfellow's Boyhood Poems; a paper by the late George Thomas Little; together with the Text of . . . Early Poems and Bibliography*, ed. by R. W. Pettengill, Saratoga Springs, N. Y., 1925.

Following upon the collapse of nineteenth-century poetic conventions, Longfellow fell into disrepute, but there has latterly been a renewal of interest in his work as a narrative poet, a writer of sonnets, and an expert poetic craftsman. Master in all periods of his career of a lucid style, and moving easily in a great variety of verse forms, the poet is deceptively simple, concealing his prosodic dexterity so well as to lead superficial readers to the belief that he is merely "the children's poet." Much of his gentle romanticism is, indeed, outmoded, especially when it takes the form of dreamy didactic verse. This was once widely popular, for Longfellow formerly appealed to a public emerging from the rigors of Calvinism. To them his appeal lay in his moral idealism, his sentiment, and the easy clarity of his style. Modern critics prefer to think of him as an unsurpassed writer of narratives. Familiarity has dulled the edge of that daring experiment, *Hiawatha*, in which Longfellow characteristically "gentled" Indian folklore, but nothing can dim the pictorial excellence of *Evangeline*, and no other American poet has the range and variety of effects found in the *Tales of a Wayside Inn*. Moreover, Longfellow is a master of the sonnet; and even his didactic verse is frequently pithy and laconic. He is also great as a poet of the sea. His principal work in his own time was to forward and popularize the romantic revolution in American poetry and to familiarize his countrymen with European literature through his admirable translations and his rehandling of Old World legends and stories. Even today no one can afford to be ignorant of this aspect of his writing.

## THE SPIRIT OF POETRY

Written in the autumn of 1825, first published in the *Atlantic Souvenir* for 1828 and afterwards in *Voices of the Night* (1839), "The Spirit of Poetry" is interesting because it hints at the youthful writer's idea of poetry and because it is filled with literary echoes which indicate what he has been reading.

There is a quiet spirit in these woods,  
That dwells where'er the gentle south-wind blows;  
Where, underneath the white-thorn, in the glade,  
The wild flowers bloom, or, kissing the soft air,  
The leaves above their sunny palms outspread.  
With what a tender and impassioned voice  
It fills the nice and delicate ear of thought,

When the fast ushering star of morning comes  
 O'er-riding the gray hills with golden scarf;  
 Or when the cowed and dusky-sandalled Eve,  
 In mourning weeds, from out the western gate,  
 10  
 Departs with silent pace! That spirit moves  
 In the green valley, where the silver brook,  
 From its full laver, pours the white cascade;  
 And, babbling low amid the tangled woods,  
 15  
 Slips down through moss-grown stones with endless laughter.  
 And frequent, on the everlasting hills,  
 Its feet go forth, when it doth wrap itself  
 In all the dark embroidery of the storm,  
 And shouts the stern, strong wind. And here, amid  
 20  
 The silent majesty of these deep woods,  
 Its presence shall uplift thy thoughts from earth,  
 As to the sunshine and the pure, bright air  
 Their tops the green trees lift. Hence gifted bards  
 Have ever loved the calm and quiet shades.  
 25  
 For them there was an eloquent voice in all  
 The sylvan pomp of woods, the golden sun,  
 The flowers, the leaves, the river on its way,  
 Blue skies, and silver clouds, and gentle winds,  
 The swelling upland, where the sidelong sun  
 30  
 Aslant the wooden slope, at evening, goes,  
 Groves, through whose broken roof the sky looks in,  
 Mountain, and shattered cliff, and sunny vale,  
 The distant lake, fountains, and mighty trees,  
 In many a lazy syllable, repeating  
 35  
 Their old poetic legends to the wind.

And this is the sweet spirit, that doth fill  
 The world; and, in these wayward days of youth,  
 My busy fancy oft embodies it,  
 As a bright image of the light and beauty  
 40  
 That dwell in nature; of the heavenly forms  
 We worship in our dreams, and the soft hues  
 That stain the wild bird's wing, and flush the clouds  
 When the sun sets. Within her tender eye  
 The heaven of April, with its changing light,  
 45  
 And when it wears the blue of May, is hung,  
 And on her lip the rich, red rose. Her hair  
 Is like the summer tresses of the trees,  
 When twilight makes them brown, and on her cheek  
 Blushes the richness of an autumn sky,  
 50  
 With ever-shifting beauty. Then her breath,  
 It is so like the gentle air of Spring,  
 As, from the morning's dewy flowers, it comes  
 Full of their fragrance, that it is a joy  
 To have it round us, and her silver voice  
 55  
 Is the rich music of a summer bird,  
 Heard in the still night, with its passionate cadence.

## A PSALM OF LIFE

WHAT THE HEART OF THE YOUNG MAN SAID TO  
THE PSALMIST

Longfellow long held this poem by him, and first made it public by reading it to a Harvard class during a lecture on Goethe. The subject of the hour was *Wilhelm Meister*; and the poem is to be understood as the American version of the doctrine of self-upbuilding of that novel. The poem is partly a denial of romantic dreaming, and partly an asseveration of a religious attitude opposed to Calvinism. It was published in the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, September, 1838, after Longfellow read it to his class, and collected into *Voices of the Night* (1839). The "Psalmist" is a general reference to David (or perhaps the author of Ecclesiastes) because of the doctrine of the vanity of life occasionally set forth in the Old Testament. Despite the lucidity of the poem, it deserves more careful study than hasty readers usually give it.

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,  
Life is but an empty dream!—  
For the soul is dead that slumbers,  
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest! 5  
And the grave is not its goal;  
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,  
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow, 10  
Is our destined end or way;  
But to act, that each to-morrow  
Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,  
And our hearts, though stout and brave, 15  
Still, like muffled drums, are beating  
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,  
In the bivouac of Life,  
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!  
Be a hero in the strife! 20

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!  
Let the dead Past bury its dead!  
Act,—act in the living Present!  
Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us 25  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another, 30  
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,  
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,  
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,  
With a heart for any fate;  
Still achieving, still pursuing, 35  
Learn to labor and to wait.

## HYMN TO THE NIGHT

Ἀσπασίη, τριλλιστος

Written in the summer of 1839, published in *Voices of the Night* (1839). Motto: "Welcome, three times prayed for." See line 23.

I heard the trailing garments of the Night  
Sweep through her marble halls!  
I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light  
From the celestial walls!

I felt her presence, by its spell of might, 5  
Stoop o'er me from above;  
The calm, majestic presence of the Night,  
As of the one I love.

I heard the sounds of sorrow and delight, 10  
The manifold, soft chimes,  
That fill the haunted chambers of the Night,  
Like some old poet's rhymes.

From the cool cisterns of the midnight air  
My spirit drank repose;  
The fountain of perpetual peace flows 15  
there,—  
From those deep cisterns flows.

O holy Night! from thee I learn to bear  
What man has borne before!  
Thou layest thy finger on the lips of Care,  
And they complain no more. 20



Peace! Peace! Orestes-like I breathe this  
prayer!

Descend with broad-winged flight,  
The welcome, the thrice-prayed for, the most  
fair,  
The best-beloved Night!

### THE BELEAGUERED CITY

Written September, 1839; published in the  
*Southern Literary Messenger*, November,  
1839, and collected into *Voices of the Night*  
(1839). The poem was suggested by a note  
in Scott's *Border Minstrelsy*: "Similar to this  
was the *Nacht Lager*, or midnight camp,  
which seemed nightly to beleaguer the walls  
of Prague, but which disappeared upon the  
recitation of . . . magical words."

I have read, in some old, marvellous tale,  
Some legend strange and vague,  
That a midnight host of spectres pale  
Beleaguered the walls of Prague.

Beside the Moldau's rushing stream, 5  
With the wan moon overhead,  
There stood, as in an awful dream,  
The army of the dead.

White as a sea-fog, landward bound, 10  
The spectral camp was seen,  
And, with a sorrowful, deep sound,  
The river flowed between.

No other voice nor sound was there,  
No drum, nor sentry's pace;  
The mist-like banners clasped the air 15  
As clouds with clouds embrace.

But when the old cathedral bell  
Proclaimed the morning prayer,  
The white pavilions rose and fell 20  
On the alarmed air.

Down the broad valley fast and far  
The troubled army fled;

Up rose the glorious morning star,  
The ghastly host was dead.

I have read, in the marvellous heart of man,  
That strange and mystic scroll, 26  
That an army of phantoms vast and wan  
Beleaguer the human soul.

Encamped beside Life's rushing stream,  
In Fancy's misty light, 30  
Gigantic shapes and shadows gleam  
Portentous through the night.

Upon its midnight battle-ground  
The spectral camp is seen,  
And, with a sorrowful, deep sound, 35  
Flows the River of Life between.

No other voice nor sound is there,  
In the army of the grave;  
No other challenge breaks the air, 40  
But the rushing of Life's wave.

And when the solemn and deep church-bell  
Entreats the soul to pray,  
The midnight phantoms feel the spell, 45  
The shadows sweep away.

Down the broad Vale of Tears afar 45  
The spectral camp is fled;  
Faith shineth as a morning star,  
Our ghastly fears are dead.

### SERENADE

Written in 1840, published in *Graham's Magazine*, September, 1842, and later incorporated in *The Spanish Student* (1843), Act I, scene 3, where it is sung by Victorian outside Preciosa's bedroom.

Stars of the summer night!  
Far in yon azure deeps,  
Hide, hide your golden light!  
She sleeps!  
My lady sleeps! 5  
Sleeps!

21. *Orestes-like*—At the conclusion of Aeschylus's tragedy *The Choephora*, Orestes, who has murdered his mother to avenge his father, is pursued by the Furies. The subsequent play, *The Eumenides*, relates his expiation and final peace. 4. *Prague*—on the Moldau River, the capital of Czechoslovakia (and of Bohemia proper).

Moon of the summer night!  
 Far down yon western steeps,  
 Sink, sink in silver light!  
 She sleeps! 10  
 My lady sleeps!  
 Sleeps!

Wind of the summer night!  
 Where yonder woodbine creeps,  
 Fold, fold thy pinions light! 15  
 She sleeps!  
 My lady sleeps!  
 Sleeps!

Dreams of the summer night!  
 Tell her, her lover keeps 20  
 Watch! while in slumbers light  
 She sleeps!  
 My lady sleeps!  
 Sleeps!

## THE SKELETON IN ARMOR

Written in 1840, first published in the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, January, 1841, and revised and included in *Ballads and Other Poems* (1841). Longfellow's account of the genesis of the poem says a skeleton in armor was dug up near Fall River, and "I suppose it to be the remains of one of the old Northern sea-rovers, who came to this country in the tenth century. Of course I make the tradition myself." The Round Tower (line 134) stood at Newport.

"Speak! speak! thou fearful guest!  
 Who, with thy hollow breast  
 Still in rude armor drest,  
 Comest to daunt me!  
 Wrapt not in Eastern balms, 5  
 But with thy fleshless palms  
 Stretched, as if asking alms,  
 Why dost thou haunt me?"

Then, from those cavernous eyes  
 Pale flashes seemed to rise, 10

As when the Northern skies  
 Gleam in December;  
 And, like the water's flow  
 Under December's snow,  
 Came a dull voice of woe 15  
 From the heart's chamber.

"I was a Viking old!  
 My deeds, though manifold,  
 No Skald in song has told,  
 No Saga taught thee! 20  
 Take heed, that in thy verse  
 Thou dost the tale rehearse,  
 Else dread a dead man's curse;  
 For this I sought thee.

"Far in the Northern Land, 25  
 By the wild Baltic's strand,  
 I, with my childish hand,  
 Tamed the gerfalcon;  
 And, with my skates fast-bound,  
 Skimmed the half-frozen Sound, 30  
 That the poor whimpering hound  
 Trembled to walk on.

"Oft to his frozen lair  
 Tracked I the grisly bear,  
 While from my path the hare 35  
 Fled like a shadow;  
 Oft through the forest dark  
 Followed the were-wolf's bark,  
 Until the soaring lark  
 Sang from the meadow. 40

"But when I older grew,  
 Joining a corsair's crew,  
 O'er the dark sea I flew  
 With the marauders. 45  
 Wild was the life we led;  
 Many the souls that sped,  
 Many the hearts that bled,  
 By our stern orders.

"Many a wassail-bout  
 Wore the long Winter out; 50  
 Often our midnight shout  
 Set the cocks crowing,

5. **Wrapt not . . .**—that is, unembalmed. 28. **gerfalcon**—a falcon common to the Arctic regions. 34. **grisly bear**—found only in North America, but Longfellow may mean grisly in the sense of grim. 38. **were-wolf's**—in folklore, a person changed into a wolf but retaining human intelligence; while transformed into a wolf, the person so changed commits beastly crimes.

- As we the Berserk's tale  
Measured in cups of ale,  
Draining the oaken pail, 55  
Filled to o'erflowing.
- "Once as I told in glee  
Tales of the stormy sea,  
Soft eyes did gaze on me,  
Burning yet tender; 60  
And as the white stars shine  
On the dark Norway pine,  
On that dark heart of mine  
Fell their soft splendor.
- "I wooed the blue-eyed maid, 65  
Yielding, yet half afraid,  
And in the forest's shade  
Our vows were plighted.  
Under its loosened vest  
Fluttered her little breast, 70  
Like birds within their nest  
By the hawk frightened.
- "Bright in her father's hall  
Shields gleamed upon the wall,  
Loud sang the minstrels all, 75  
Chanting his glory;  
When of old Hildebrand  
I asked his daughter's hand,  
Mute did the minstrels stand  
To hear my story. 80
- "While the brown ale he quaffed,  
Loud then the champion laughed,  
And as the wind-gusts waft  
The sea-foam brightly,  
So the loud laugh of scorn, 85  
Out of those lips unshorn,  
From the deep drinking-horn  
Blew the foam lightly.
- "She was a Prince's child,  
I but a Viking wild, 90  
And though she blushed and smiled,  
I was discarded!  
Should not the dove so white  
Follow the sea-mew's flight,  
Why did they leave that night 95  
Her nest unguarded?
- "Scarce had I put to sea,  
Bearing the maid with me,  
Fairest of all was she  
Among the Norsemen! 100  
When on the white sea-strand,  
Waving his armed hand,  
Saw we old Hildebrand,  
With twenty horsemen.
- "Then launched they to the blast, 105  
Bent like a reed each mast,  
Yet we were gaining fast,  
When the wind failed us;  
And with a sudden flaw  
Came round the gusty Skaw, 110  
So that our foe we saw  
Laugh as he hailed us.
- "And as to catch the gale  
Round veered the flapping sail,  
'Death' was the helmsman's hail, 115  
'Death without quarter!'  
Mid-ships with iron keel  
Struck we her ribs of steel;  
Down her black hulk did reel  
Through the black water! 120
- "As with his wings aslant,  
Sails the fierce cormorant,  
Seeking some rocky haunt,  
With his prey laden,— 125  
So toward the open main,  
Beating to sea again,  
Through the wild hurricane,  
Bore I the maiden.
- "Three weeks we westward bore,  
And when the storm was o'er, 130  
Cloud-like we saw the shore  
Stretching to leeward;  
There for my lady's bower  
Built I the lofty tower,  
Which, to this very hour, 135  
Stands looking seaward.
- "There lived we many years;  
Time dried the maiden's tears;  
She had forgot her fears,  
She was a mother; 140

53. *Berserk's*—type of violent Norse warrior. 77. *Hildebrand*—a name vaguely connoting the north. No particular historical person is meant. 110. *Skaw*—the northern point of Jutland in Denmark.

- Death closed her mild blue eyes,  
Under that tower she lies;  
Ne'er shall the sun arise  
On such another!
- 145 "Still grew my bosom then,  
Still as a stagnant fen!  
Hateful to me were men,  
The sunlight hateful!  
In the vast forest here,  
Clad in my warlike gear,  
Fell I upon my spear,  
Oh, death was grateful!
- 150 "Thus, seamed with many scars,  
Bursting these prison bars,  
Up to its native stars  
My soul ascended!  
There from the flowing bowl  
Deep drinks the warrior's soul,  
*Skoal!* to the Northland! *skaal!*"  
Thus the tale ended.
- 155 Deep and still, that gliding stream  
Beautiful to thee must seem,  
As the river of a dream. 15
- Then why pause with indecision  
When bright angels in thy vision  
Beckon thee to fields Elysian?
- Seest thou shadows sailing by,  
As the dove, with startled eye, 20  
Sees the falcon's shadow fly?
- Hearst thou voices on the shore,  
That our ears perceive no more,  
Deafened by the cataract's roar?
- O, thou child of many prayers! 25  
Life hath quicksands,—Life hath snares!  
Care and age come unawares!
- Like the swell of some sweet tune,  
Morning rises into noon,  
May glides onward into June. 30

## MAIDENHOOD

Written in 1841, gathered into *Ballads and Other Poems* (1841), and also published in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, January, 1842.

- Maiden! with the meek, brown eyes,  
In whose orbs a shadow lies  
Like the dusk in evening skies!
- Thou whose locks outshine the sun,  
Golden tresses, wreathed in one,  
As the braided streamlets run!
- 5 Standing, with reluctant feet,  
Where the brook and river meet,  
Womanhood and childhood fleet!
- Gazing, with a timid glance,  
On the brooklet's swift advance,  
On the river's broad expanse!
- 10 Childhood is the bough, where slumbered  
Birds and blossoms many-numbered;—  
Age, that bough with snows encumbered.
- Gather, then, each flower that grows,  
When the young heart overflows, 35  
To embalm that tent of snows.
- Bear a lily in thy hand;  
Gates of brass cannot withstand  
One touch of that magic wand.
- Bear through sorrow, wrong, and ruth, 40  
In thy heart the dew of youth,  
On thy lips the smile of truth.
- O, that dew, like balm, shall steal  
Into wounds, that cannot heal,  
Even as sleep our eyes doth seal; 45
- And that smile, like sunshine, dart  
Into many a sunless heart,  
For a smile of God thou art.

159. *Skoal*—"In Scandinavia, this is the customary salutation when drinking a health. I have slightly changed the orthography of the word, in order to preserve the correct pronunciation." (Longfellow's note)

## MEZZO CAMMIN

WRITTEN AT BOPPARD ON THE RHINE AUGUST 25,  
1842, JUST BEFORE LEAVING FOR HOME

Published in the *Life*, Vol. I (1886). The title is from the first line of the *Divine Comedy* of Dante, *Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita*—"Midway upon the journey of our life." Dante began his poem at thirty-five; Longfellow was also half of the biblical three score years and ten.

Half of my life is gone, and I have let  
The years slip from me and have not fulfilled  
The aspiration of my youth, to build  
Some tower of song with lofty parapet.  
Not indolence, nor pleasure, nor the fret 5  
Of restless passions that would not be stilled,  
But sorrow, and a care that almost killed,  
Kept me from what I may accomplish yet;  
Though, half-way up the hill, I see the Past  
Lying beneath me with its sounds and  
sights,— 10  
A city in the twilight dim and vast,  
With smoking roofs, soft bells, and gleaming  
lights,—  
And hear above me on the autumnal blast  
The cataract of Death far thundering from  
the heights.

THE ARSENAL AT SPRING-  
FIELD

Written in 1844, published in *Graham's Magazine*, April, 1844, and collected in *The Belfry of Bruges* (1845). On his wedding journey in 1843, Longfellow and his wife visited the United States arsenal at Springfield, Massachusetts, with Charles Sumner. Mrs. Longfellow remarked that the gun barrels which covered the walls looked like an organ on which Death might play. The poem

was written at her urging. The forties saw a marked peace movement in the United States, of which the League of Universal Brotherhood, founded by Elihu Burritt in 1846, was a characteristic expression. Cf. Bryant's "The Battle-Field."

This is the Arsenal. From floor to ceiling,  
Like a huge organ, rise the burnished  
arms;  
But from their silent pipes no anthem pealing  
Startles the villages with strange alarms.

Ah! what a sound will rise, how wild and  
dreary, 5  
When the death-angel touches those swift  
keys!  
What loud lament and dismal Miserere  
Will mingle with their awful symphonies!

I hear even now the infinite fierce chorus,  
The cries of agony, the endless groan, 10  
Which, through the ages that have gone be-  
fore us,  
In long reverberations reach our own.

On helm and harness rings the Saxon ham-  
mer,  
Through Cimbric forest roars the Norse-  
man's song,  
And loud, amid the universal clamor, 15  
O'er distant deserts sounds the Tartar  
gong.

I hear the Florentine, who from his palace  
Wheels out his battle-bell with dreadful  
din,  
And Aztec priests upon their teocallis  
Beat the wild war-drums made of serpent's  
skin; 20

The tumult of each sacked and burning vil-  
lage;  
The shout that every prayer for mercy  
drowns;

4. tower of song—the *Christus* (1872), which Longfellow regarded as the central work of his life. 7. care—the death of his first wife in 1835. 7. Miserere—the beginning of Ps. 50 in the Vulgate Bible is "*Miserere mei, Domine*"—"Have mercy upon me, O Lord." 13. Saxon hammer—loosely used for battle club. 14. Cimbric forest—vague reference to the German forests whence the Cimbri and the Teutones emerged to invade the Roman Empire in the second century B.C. 17-18. Florentine . . . battle-bell—The Florentines, when going into battle, wheeled the Martinella, or battle bell, near to the standard, and beat upon it. 19. teocallis—A teocalli was a truncated pyramid surmounted by a temple and used for worship by the Aztecs.

The soldiers' revels in the midst of pillage;  
The wail of famine in beleaguered towns;

The bursting shell, the gateway wrenched  
asunder, 25  
The rattling musketry, the clashing blade  
And ever and anon, in tones of thunder,  
The diapason of the cannonade.

Is it, O man, with such discordant noises,  
With such accursed instruments as these,  
Thou drownest Nature's sweet and kindly  
voices, 31  
And jarrest the celestial harmonies?

Were half the power, that fills the world  
with terror,  
Were half the wealth, bestowed on camps  
and courts,  
Given to redeem the human mind from  
error, 35  
There were no need of arsenals nor forts:

The warrior's name would be a name ab-  
horred!  
And every nation, that should lift again  
Its hand against a brother, on its forehead  
Would wear forevermore the curse of  
Cain!

Down the dark future, through long gen-  
erations, 41  
The echoing sounds grow fainter and then  
cease;  
And like a bell, with solemn, sweet vibra-  
tions,  
I hear once more the voice of Christ say,  
"Peace!"

Peace! and no longer from its brazen por-  
tals 45  
The blast of War's great organ shakes the  
skies!  
But beautiful as songs of the immortals,  
The holy melodies of love arise.

## THE EVENING STAR

Written October 30, 1845, "in the rustic  
seat of the old apple-tree," and first called  
"Hesperus." Addressed to the poet's second  
wife. Published in *The Belfry of Bruges* vol-  
ume (1845).

Lo! in the painted oriel of the West,  
Whose panes the sunken sun incarnadines,  
Like a fair lady at her casement, shines  
The evening star, the star of love and rest!  
And then anon she doth divest herself 5  
Of all her radiant garments, and reclines  
Behind the sombre screen of yonder pines,  
With slumber and soft dreams of love op-  
pressed.

O my beloved, my sweet Hesperus!  
My morning and my evening star of love!  
My best and gentlest lady! even thus, 11  
As that fair planet in the sky above,  
Dost thou retire unto thy rest at night,  
And from thy darkened window fades the  
light.

## SEA-WEED

Published first in *Graham's Magazine*,  
January, 1845; afterwards in *The Belfry of  
Bruges* (1845), and later transferred to "The  
Seaside and the Fireside" division of the  
*Works*.

When descends on the Atlantic  
The gigantic  
Storm-wind of the equinox,  
Landward in his wrath he scourges  
The toiling surges, 5  
Laden with seaweed from the rocks:

From Bermuda's reefs; from edges  
Of sunken ledges,  
In some far-off bright Azore;  
From Bahama, and the dashing, 10  
Silver-flashing  
Surges of San Salvador;

40. *curse of Cain*—Cf. Gen. 4:11. 1. *oriel*—here used loosely as a poetic word for window.  
10. *morning and . . . evening star*—When Venus appears as the evening star, it is called Hes-  
perus; as the morning star, Phosphorus.

From the tumbling surf, that buries The Orkneyan skerries, Answering the hoarse Hebrides; And from wrecks of ships, and drifting Spars, uplifting On the desolate, rainy seas;—		From the far-off isles enchanted, Heaven has planted With the golden fruit of Truth; From the flashing surf, whose vision Gleams Elysian In the tropic clime of Youth;	
Ever drifting, drifting, drifting On the shifting Currents of the restless main; Till in sheltered coves, and reaches Of sandy beaches, All have found repose again.	15	From the strong Will, and the Endeavor That forever Wrestle with the tides of Fate; From the wrecks of Hope far-scattered, Tempest-shattered, Floating waste and desolate;—	35
So when storms of wild emotion Strike the ocean Of the poet's soul, erelong From each cave and rocky fastness, In its vastness, Floats some fragment of a song:	20	Ever drifting, drifting, drifting On the shifting Currents of the restless heart; Till at length in books recorded, They, like hoarded Household words, no more depart.	40
	25		45
	30		

## EVANGELINE

## A TALE OF ACADIE

Written 1845-47; published October 30, 1847. The genesis of the tale is a story told by the Rev. H. L. Conolly at Longfellow's dinner table, and offered as a subject for a romance to Hawthorne, who, however, refused it. As noted in Hawthorne's *American Note-Books* the story runs: "H. C. L. heard from a French Canadian a story of a young couple in Acadie. On their marriage-day all the men of the Province were summoned to assemble in the church to hear a proclamation. When assembled, they were all seized and shipped off to be distributed through New England,—among them the new bridegroom. His bride set off in search of him—wandered about New England all her life-time, and at last when she was old, she found her bridegroom on his death-bed. The shock was so great that it killed her likewise." Longfellow drew his local color for Part One largely from T. C. Haliburton, *An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia* (1829), which contains large extracts from the Abbé Raynal's "emotional account of the French settlers" in his *Histoire philosophique . . . des . . . Indes* (1770). The immense popularity of the poem occasioned numerous investigations of the history of the deportation which serve to show that the Acadians were not so blameless as Raynal and others had supposed.

This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks,  
Bearded with moss, and in garments green, indistinct in the twilight,  
Stand like Druids of eld, with voices sad and prophetic,

3. **Druids**—priests of the ancient Celts, who worshiped in the forests.

Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on their bosoms.  
 Loud from its rocky caverns, the deep-voiced neighboring ocean  
 Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of the forest. 5

This is the forest primeval; but where are the hearts that beneath it  
 Leaped like the roe, when he hears in the woodland the voice of the hunstman?  
 Where is the thatch-roofed village, the home of Acadian farmers,—  
 Men whose lives glided on like rivers that water the woodlands, 10  
 Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting an image of heaven?  
 Waste are those pleasant farms, and the farmers forever departed!  
 Scattered like dust and leaves, when the mighty blasts of October  
 Seize them, and whirl them aloft, and sprinkle them far o'er the ocean.  
 Naught but tradition remains of the beautiful village of Grand-Pré. 15

Ye who believe in affection that hopes, and endures, and is patient,  
 Ye who believe in the beauty and strength of woman's devotion,  
 List to the mournful tradition, still sung by the pines of the forest;  
 List to a Tale of Love in Acadie, home of the happy.

## PART THE FIRST

## I

In the Acadian land, on the shores of the Basin of Minas, 20  
 Distant, secluded, still, the little village of Grand-Pré  
 Lay in the fruitful valley. Vast meadows stretched to the eastward,  
 Giving the village its name, and pasture to flocks without number.  
 Dikes, that the hands of the farmers had raised with labor incessant,  
 Shut out the turbulent tides; but at stated seasons the flood-gates 25  
 Opened, and welcomed the sea to wander at will o'er the meadows.  
 West and south there were fields of flax, and orchards and cornfields  
 Spreading afar and unfenced o'er the plain; and away to the northward  
 Blomidon rose, and the forests old, and aloft on the mountains  
 Sea-fogs pitched their tents, and mists from the mighty Atlantic 30  
 Looked on the happy valley, but ne'er from their station descended.  
 There, in the midst of its farms, reposed the Acadian village.  
 Strongly built were the houses, with frames of oak and of hemlock,  
 Such as the peasants of Normandy built in the reign of the Henries.  
 Thatched were the roofs, with dormer-windows; and gables projecting 35  
 Over the basement below protected and shaded the doorway.  
 There in the tranquil evenings of summer, when brightly the sunset  
 Lighted the village street, and gilded the vanes on the chimneys,  
 Matrons and maidens sat in snow-white caps and in kirtles  
 Scarlet and blue and green, with distaffs spinning the golden 40  
 Flax for the gossiping looms, whose noisy shuttles within doors  
 Mingled their sound with the whirl of the wheels and the songs of the maidens.

9. **Acadian farmers**—Nova Scotia, formerly known as Acadie, was until the middle of the eighteenth century mainly settled by farmers from the west coast of France, beginning about 1604. 20. **Basin of Minas**—at the head of the Bay of Fundy. 21. **Grand-Pré**—Great Meadow, as explained in line 23. 29. **Blomidon**—a headland of red sandstone at the entrance of the Basin of Minas. 34. **Henries**—vague reference to the reigns of Henry III (1574-89) and Henry IV (1589-1610) of France.



Solemnly down the street came the parish priest, and the children  
 Paused in their play to kiss the hand he extended to bless them.  
 Reverend walked he among them; and up rose matrons and maidens, 45  
 Hailing his slow approach with words of affectionate welcome.  
 Then came the laborers home from the field, and serenely the sun sank  
 Down to his rest, and twilight prevailed. Anon from the belfry  
 Softly the Angelus sounded, and over the roofs of the village  
 Columns of pale blue smoke, like clouds of incense ascending, 50  
 Rose from a hundred hearths, the homes of peace and contentment.  
 Thus dwelt together in love these simple Acadian farmers,—  
 Dwelt in the love of God and of man. Alike were they free from  
 Fear, that reigns with the tyrant, and envy, the vice of republics.  
 Neither locks had they to their doors, nor bars to their windows; 55  
 But their dwellings were open as day and the hearts of the owners;  
 There the richest was poor, and the poorest lived in abundance.

Somewhat apart from the village, and nearer the Basin of Minas,  
 Benedict Bellefontaine, the wealthiest farmer of Grand-Pré,  
 Dwelt on his goodly acres; and with him, directing his household, 60  
 Gentle Evangeline lived, his child, and the pride of the village.  
 Stalworth and stately in form was the man of seventy winters;  
 Hearty and hale was he, an oak that is covered with snow-flakes;  
 White as the snow were his locks, and his cheeks as brown as the oak-leaves.  
 Fair was she to behold, that maiden of seventeen summers. 65  
 Black were her eyes as the berry that grows on the thorn by the wayside,  
 Black, yet how softly they gleamed beneath the brown shade of her tresses!  
 Sweet was her breath as the breath of kine that feed in the meadows.  
 When in the harvest heat she bore to the reapers at noontide  
 Flagons of home-brewed ale, ah! fair in sooth was the maiden. 70  
 Fairer was she when, on Sunday morn, while the bell from its turret  
 Sprinkled with holy sounds the air, as the priest with his hyssop  
 Sprinkles the congregation, and scatters blessings upon them,  
 Down the long street she passed, with her chaplet of beads and her missal,  
 Wearing her Norman cap and her kirtle of blue, and the ear-rings 75  
 Brought in the olden time from France, and since, as an heirloom,  
 Handed down from mother to child, through long generations.  
 But a celestial brightness—a more ethereal beauty—  
 Shone on her face and encircled her form, when, after confession,  
 Homeward serenely she walked with God's benediction upon her. 80  
 When she had passed, it seemed like the ceasing of exquisite music.

Firmly builded with rafters of oak, the house of the farmer  
 Stood on the side of a hill commanding the sea; and a shady  
 Sycamore grew by the door, with a woodbine wreathing around it.  
 Rudely carved was the porch, with seats beneath; and a footpath 85  
 Led through an orchard wide, and disappeared in the meadow.  
 Under the sycamore-tree were hives overhung by a penthouse,  
 Such as the traveler sees in regions remote by the roadside,

49. *Angelus*—bell rung at morning, noon, and night to call the faithful to their devotions.  
 62. *Stalworth*—unusual form of stalwart. 72. *hyssop*—instrument used for sprinkling holy  
 water. 74. *missal*—book of devotions; specifically, the book of the mass.

Built o'er a box for the poor, or the blessed image of Mary.  
 Farther down, on the slope of the hill, was the well with its moss-grown 90  
 Bucket, fastened with iron, and near it a trough for the horses.  
 Shielding the house from storms, on the north, were the barns and the farmyard.  
 There stood the broad-wheeled wains and the antique ploughs and the harrows;  
 There were the folds for the sheep; and there, in his feathered seraglio,  
 Strutted the lordly turkey, and crowed the cock, with the selfsame 95  
 Voice that in ages of old had startled the penitent Peter.  
 Bursting with hay were the barns, themselves a village. In each one  
 Far o'er the gable projected a roof of thatch; and a staircase,  
 Under the sheltering eaves, led up to the odorous corn-loft.  
 There too the dove-cot stood, with its meek and innocent inmates 100  
 Murmuring ever of love; while above in the variant breezes  
 Numberless noisy weathercocks rattled and sang of mutation.

Thus, at peace with God and the world, the farmer of Grand-Pré  
 Lived on his sunny farm, and Evangeline governed his household.  
 Many a youth, as he knelt in the church and opened his missal, 105  
 Fixed his eyes upon her as the saint of his deepest devotion;  
 Happy was he who might touch her hand or the hem of her garment!  
 Many a suitor came to her door, by the darkness befriended,  
 And, as he knocked and waited to hear the sound of her footsteps,  
 Knew not which beat the louder, his heart or the knocker of iron; 110  
 Or, at the joyous feast of the Patron Saint of the village,  
 Bolder grew, and pressed her hand in the dance as he whispered  
 Hurried words of love, that seemed a part of the music.  
 But among all who came young Gabriel only was welcome;  
 Gabriel Lajeunesse, the son of Basil the blacksmith, 115  
 Who was a mighty man in the village, and honored of all men;  
 For, since the birth of time, throughout all ages and nations,  
 Has the craft of the smith been held in repute by the people.  
 Basil was Benedict's friend. Their children from earliest childhood  
 Grew up together as brother and sister; and Father Felician, 120  
 Priest and pedagogue both in the village, had taught them their letters  
 Out of the selfsame book, with the hymns of the church and the plain-song  
 But when the hymn was sung, and the daily lesson completed,  
 Swiftly they hurried away to the forge of Basil the blacksmith.  
 There at the door they stood, with wondering eyes to behold him 125  
 Take in his leathern lap the hoof of the horse as a plaything,  
 Nailing the shoe in its place; while near him the tire of the cart-wheel  
 Lay like a fiery snake, coiled round in a circle of cinders.  
 Oft on autumnal eves, when without in the gathering darkness  
 Bursting with light seemed the smithy, through every cranny and crevice, 130  
 Warm by the forge within they watched the laboring bellows,  
 And as its panting ceased, and the sparks expired in the ashes,  
 Merrily laughed, and said they were nuns going into the chapel.  
 Oft on sledges in winter, as swift as the swoop of the eagle,  
 Down the hillside bounding, they glided away o'er the meadow. 135  
 Oft in the barns they climbed to the populous nests on the rafters,

96. Peter—*Cf.* Matt. 26: 74-75. 122. plain-song—Gregorian music (unaccompanied). used in church services.

Seeking with eager eyes that wondrous stone, which the swallow  
 Brings from the shore of the sea to restore the sight of its fledglings;  
 Lucky was he who found that stone in the nest of the swallow!  
 Thus passed a few swift years, and they no longer were children. 140  
 He was a valiant youth, and his face, like the face of the morning,  
 Gladdened the earth with its light, and ripened thought into action.  
 She was a woman now, with the heart and hopes of a woman.  
 "Sunshine of St. Eulalie," was she called; for that was the sunshine  
 Which, as the farmers believed, would load their orchards with apples; 145  
 She too would bring to her husband's house delight and abundance,  
 Filling it with love and the ruddy faces of children.

## II

Now had the season returned, when the nights grow colder and longer,  
 And the retreating sun the sign of the Scorpion enters.  
 Birds of passage sailed through the air, from the ice-bound, 150  
 Desolate northern bays to the shores of tropical islands.  
 Harvests were gathered in; and wild with the winds of September  
 Wrestled the trees of the forest, as Jacob of old with the angel.  
 All the signs foretold a winter long and inclement.  
 Bees, with prophetic instinct of want, had hoarded their honey 155  
 Till the hives overflowed; and the Indian hunters asserted  
 Cold would the winter be, for thick was the fur of the foxes.  
 Such was the advent of autumn. Then followed that beautiful season,  
 Called by the pious Acadian peasants the Summer of All-Saints!  
 Filled was the air with a dreamy and magical light; and the landscape 160  
 Lay as if new-created in all the freshness of childhood.  
 Peace seemed to reign upon earth, and the restless heart of the ocean  
 Was for a moment consoled. All sounds were in harmony blended.  
 Voices of children at play, the crowing of cocks in the farm-yards,  
 Whir of wings in the drowsy air, and the cooing of pigeons, 165  
 All were subdued and low as the murmurs of love, and the great sun  
 Looked with the eye of love through the golden vapors around him;  
 While arrayed in its robes of russet and scarlet and yellow,  
 Bright with the sheen of the dew, each glittering tree of the forest  
 Flashed like the plane-tree the Persian adorned with mantles and jewels. 170

Now recommenced the reign of rest and affection and stillness.  
 Day with its burden and heat had departed, and twilight descending  
 Brought back the evening star to the sky, and the herds of the homestead.  
 Pawing the ground they came, and resting their necks on each other,  
 And with their nostrils distended inhaling the freshness of evening. 175  
 Foremost, bearing the bell, Evangeline's beautiful heifer,  
 Proud of her snow-white hide, and the ribbon that waved from her collar,

137. swallow—The folk superstitions which appear in the poem are from Pluquet, *Contes populaires*, but Longfellow drew them from Wright, *Literature and Superstitions of England in the Middle Ages*. 144. St. Eulalie—According to Pluquet, "If the sun laughs on the day of Saint Eulalie, there will be plenty of apples and cider." St. Eulalie's day is February 12. 149. Scorpion—one of the signs of the zodiac, which the sun "enters" in October. 153. Jacob—*Cf.* Gen. 32: 24-30. 159. Summer of All-Saints—our Indian summer. 170. Persian—Xerxes. Longfellow found this anecdote in Evelyn's *Silva*, Vol. II, p. 53.

Quietly paced and slow, as if conscious of human affection.  
 Then came the shepherd back with his bleating flocks from the seaside,  
 Where was their favorite pasture. Behind them followed the watch-dog, 180  
 Patient, full of importance, and grand in the pride of his instinct,  
 Walking from side to side with a lordly air, and superbly  
 Waving his bushy tail, and urging forward the stragglers;  
 Regent of flocks was he when the shepherd slept; their protector,  
 When from the forest at night, through the starry silence, the wolves howled. 185  
 Late, with the rising moon, returned the wains from the marshes,  
 Laden with briny hay, that filled the air with its odor.  
 Cheerily neighed the steeds, with dew on their manes and their fetlocks,  
 While aloft on their shoulders the wooden and ponderous saddles,  
 Painted with brilliant dyes, and adorned with tassels of crimson, 190  
 Nodded in bright array, like hollyhocks heavy with blossoms.  
 Patiently stood the cows meanwhile, and yielded their udders  
 Unto the milkmaid's hand; whilst loud and in regular cadence  
 Into the sounding pails the foaming streamlets descended.  
 Lowing of cattle and peals of laughter were heard in the farm-yard, 195  
 Echoed back by the barns. Anon they sank into stillness;  
 Heavily closed, with a jarring sound, the valves of the barn-doors,  
 Rattled the wooden bars, and all for a season was silent.

In-doors, warm by the wide-mouthed fireplace, idly the farmer  
 Sat in his elbow-chair, and watched how the flames and the smoke-wreaths 200  
 Struggled together like foes in a burning city. Behind him,  
 Nodding and mocking along the wall, with gestures fantastic,  
 Darted his own huge shadow, and vanished away into darkness.  
 Faces, clumsily carved in oak, on the back of his arm-chair  
 Laughed in the flickering light, and the pewter plates on the dresser 205  
 Caught and reflected the flame, as shields of armies the sunshine.  
 Fragments of song the old man sang, and carols of Christmas,  
 Such as at home, in the olden time, his fathers before him  
 Sang in their Norman orchards and bright Burgundian vineyards.  
 Close at her father's side was the gentle Evangeline seated, 210  
 Spinning flax for the loom, that stood in the corner behind her,  
 Silent awhile were its treadles, at rest was its diligent shuttle,  
 While the monotonous drone of the wheel, like the drone of a bagpipe,  
 Followed the old man's song, and united the fragments together.  
 As in a church, when the chant of the choir at intervals ceases, 215  
 Footfalls are heard in the aisles, or words of the priest at the altar,  
 So, in each pause of the song, with measured motion the clock clicked.

Thus as they sat, there were footsteps heard, and, suddenly lifted,  
 Sounded the wooden latch, and the door swung back on its hinges.  
 Benedict knew by the hob-nailed shoes it was Basil the blacksmith, 220  
 And by her beating heart Evangeline knew who was with him.  
 "Welcome!" the farmer exclaimed, as their footsteps paused on the threshold,  
 "Welcome, Basil, my friend! Come, take thy place on the settle

197. **valves**—in the Latin sense of folding doors. 209. **Burgundian**—The Acadians were mainly from Poitou, Aunis, and Saintonge. Burgundy lies in the east of France, and Normandy in the northwest.

Close by the chimney-side, which is always empty without thee;  
 Take from the shelf overhead thy pipe and the box of tobacco; 225  
 Never so much thyself art thou as when through the curling  
 Smoke of the pipe or the forge thy friendly and jovial face gleams  
 Round and red as the harvest moon through the mist of the marshes."  
 Then, with a smile of content, thus answered Basil the blacksmith,  
 Taking with easy air the accustomed seat by the fireside:— 230  
 "Benedict Bellefontaine, thou hast ever thy jest and thy ballad!  
 Ever in cheerfullest mood art thou, when others are filled with  
 Gloomy forebodings of ill, and see only ruin before them.  
 Happy art thou, as if every day thou hadst picked up a horseshoe."  
 Pausing a moment, to take the pipe that Evangeline brought him, 235  
 And with a coal from the embers had lighted, he slowly continued:—  
 "Four days now are passed since the English ships at their anchors  
 Ride in the Gaspereau's mouth, with their cannon pointed against us.  
 What their design may be is unknown; but all are commanded  
 On the morrow to meet in the church, where his Majesty's mandate 240  
 Will be proclaimed as law in the land. Alas! in the mean time  
 Many surmises of evil alarm the hearts of the people."  
 Then made answer the farmer: "Perhaps some friendlier purpose  
 Brings these ships to our shores. Perhaps the harvests in England  
 By untimely rains or untimelier heat have been blighted, 245  
 And from our bursting barns they would feed their cattle and children."  
 "Not so thinketh the folk in the village," said warmly the blacksmith,  
 Shaking his head as in doubt; then, heaving a sigh, he continued:—  
 "Louisburg is not forgotten, nor Beau Séjour, nor Port Royal.  
 Many already have fled to the forest, and lurk on its outskirts, 250  
 Waiting with anxious hearts the dubious fate of tomorrow.  
 Arms have been taken from us, and warlike weapons of all kinds;  
 Nothing is left but the blacksmith's sledge and the scythe of the mower."  
 Then with a pleasant smile made answer the jovial farmer:—  
 "Safer are we unarmed, in the midst of our flocks and our cornfields, 255  
 Safer within these peaceful dikes besieged by the ocean,  
 Than our fathers in forts, besieged by the enemy's cannon.  
 Fear no evil, my friend, and tonight may no shadow of sorrow  
 Fall on this house and hearth; for this is the night of the contract.  
 Built are the house and the barn. The merry lads of the village 260  
 Strongly have built them and well; and, breaking the glebe round about them,  
 Filled the barn with hay, and the house with food for a twelvemonth.  
 René Leblanc will be here anon, with his papers and inkhorn.  
 Shall we not then be glad, and rejoice in the joy of our children?"  
 As apart by the window she stood, with her hand in her lover's, 265  
 Blushing Evangeline heard the words that her father had spoken,  
 And, as they died on his lips, the worthy notary entered.

238. *Gaspereau's*—a small river flowing into the Basin of Minas on the southern shore. 249. *Louisburg . . . Beau Séjour . . . Port Royal*—Louisburg, on Cape Breton Island, captured by the English in 1745 and 1758, and long a bone of contention between the two powers; Beau Séjour, on the neck connecting Acadia with the mainland, captured in 1755; and Port Royal (Annapolis), captured in 1690 and again in 1710. 261. *glebe*—soil, turf. Note the communal customs.

## III

Bent like a laboring oar, that toils in the surf of the ocean,  
 Bent, but not broken, by age was the form of the notary public;  
 Shocks of yellow hair, like the silken floss of the maize, hung 270  
 Over his shoulders; his forehead was high; and glasses with horn bows  
 Sat astride on his nose, with a look of wisdom supernal.  
 Father of twenty children was he, and more than a hundred  
 Children's children rode on his knee, and heard his great watch tick.  
 Four long years in the times of the war had he languished a captive, 275  
 Suffering much in an old French fort as the friend of the English.  
 Now, though warier grown, without all guile or suspicion,  
 Ripe in wisdom was he, but patient, and simple, and childlike.  
 He was beloved by all, and most of all by the children;  
 For he told them tales of the Loup-garou in the forest, 280  
 And of the goblin that came in the night to water the horses,  
 And of the white Létiche, the ghost of a child who unchristened  
 Died, and was doomed to haunt unseen the chambers of children;  
 And how on Christmas eve the oxen talked in the stable,  
 And how the fever was cured by a spider shut up in a nutshell, 285  
 And of the marvelous powers of four-leaved clover and horseshoes,  
 With whatsoever else was writ in the lore of the village.  
 Then up rose from his seat by the fireside Basil the blacksmith,  
 Knocked from his pipe the ashes, and slowly extending his right hand,  
 "Father Leblanc," he exclaimed, "thou hast heard the talk in the village, 290  
 And, perchance, canst tell us some news of these ships and their errand."  
 Then with modest demeanor made answer the notary public,—  
 "Gossip enough have I heard, in sooth, yet am never the wiser;  
 And what their errand may be I know not better than others.  
 Yet am I not of those who imagine some evil intention 295  
 Brings them here, for we are at peace; and why then molest us?"  
 "God's name!" shouted the hasty and somewhat irascible blacksmith;  
 "Must we in all things look for the how, and the why, and the wherefore?  
 Daily injustice is done, and might is the right of the strongest!"  
 But without heeding his warmth, continued the notary public,— 300  
 "Man is unjust, but God is just; and finally justice  
 Triumphs; and well I remember a story that often consoled me,  
 When as a captive I lay in the old French fort at Port Royal."  
 This was the old man's favorite tale, and he loved to repeat it  
 When his neighbors complained that any injustice was done them. 305  
 "Once in an ancient city, whose name I no longer remember,  
 Raised aloft on a column, a brazen statue of Justice  
 Stood in the public square, upholding the scales in its left hand,  
 And in its right a sword, as an emblem that justice presided  
 Over the laws of the land, and the hearts and homes of the people. 310  
 Even the birds had built their nests in the scales of the balance,  
 Having no fear of the sword that flashed in the sunshine above them.  
 But in the course of time the laws of the land were corrupted;

275. war—presumably King George's War, 1744-48. 280. Loup-garou—were-wolf. 302.  
 story—The *Works* note that this story is the subject of Rossini's opera *La gazza ladra* (The  
 Thievish Magpie).

Might took the place of right, and the weak were oppressed, and the mighty  
 Ruled with an iron rod. Then it chanced in a nobleman's palace 315  
 That a necklace of pearls was lost, and ere long a suspicion  
 Fell on an orphan girl who lived as maid in the household.  
 She, after form of trial condemned to die on the scaffold,  
 Patiently met her doom at the foot of the statue of Justice.  
 As to her Father in heaven her innocent spirit ascended, 320  
 Lo! o'er the city a tempest rose; and the bolts of the thunder  
 Smote the statue of bronze, and hurled in wrath from its left hand  
 Down on the pavement below the clattering scales of the balance,  
 And in the hollow thereof was found the nest of a magpie,  
 Into whose clay-built walls the necklace of pearls was inwoven." 325  
 Silenced, but not convinced, when the story was ended, the blacksmith  
 Stood like a man who fain would speak, but findeth no language;  
 All his thoughts were congealed into lines on his face, as the vapors  
 Freeze in fantastic shapes on the window-panes in the winter.

Then Evangeline lighted the brazen lamp on the table, 330  
 Filled, till it overflowed the pewter tankard with home-brewed  
 Nut-brown ale, that was famed for its strength in the village of Grand-Pré;  
 While from his pocket the notary drew his papers and inkhorn,  
 Wrote with a steady hand the date and the age of the parties,  
 Naming the dower of the bride in flocks of sheep and in cattle. 335  
 Orderly all things proceeded, and duly and well were completed,  
 And the great seal of the law was set like a sun on the margin.  
 Then from his leathern pouch the farmer threw on the table  
 Three times the old man's fee in solid pieces of silver;  
 And the notary rising, and blessing the bride and the bridegroom, 340  
 Lifted aloft the tankard of ale and drank to their welfare.  
 Wiping the foam from his lip, he solemnly bowed and departed,  
 While in silence the others sat and mused by the fireside,  
 Till Evangeline brought the draught-board out of its corner.  
 Soon was the game begun. In friendly contention the old men 345  
 Laughed at each lucky hit, or unsuccessful manoeuvre,  
 Laughed when a man was crowned, or a breach was made in the king-row.  
 Meanwhile apart, in the twilight gloom of a window's embrasure,  
 Sat the lovers and whispered together, beholding the moon rise  
 Over the pallid sea and the silvery mist of the meadows. 350  
 Silently one by one, in the infinite meadows of heaven,  
 Blossomed the lovely stars, the forget-me-nots of the angels.

Thus 'was the evening passed. Anon the bell from the belfry  
 Rang out the hour of nine, the village curfew, and straightway  
 Rose the guests and departed; and silence reigned in the household. 355  
 Many a farewell word and sweet good-night on the door-step  
 Lingered long in Evangeline's heart, and filled it with gladness.  
 Carefully then were covered the embers that glowed on the hearth-stone,  
 And on the oaken stairs resounded the tread of the farmer.  
 Soon with a soundless step the foot of Evangeline followed. 360  
 Up the staircase moved a luminous space in the darkness,

Lighted less by the lamp than the shining face of the maiden.  
 Silent she passed the hall, and entered the door of her chamber.  
 Simple that chamber was, with its curtains of white, and its clothes-press  
 Ample and high, on whose spacious shelves were carefully folded 365  
 Linen and woollen stuffs, by the hand of Evangeline woven.  
 This was the precious dower she would bring to her husband in marriage,  
 Better than flocks and herds, being proofs of her skill as a housewife.  
 Soon she extinguished her lamp, for the mellow and radiant moonlight  
 Streamed through the windows, and lighted the room, till the heart of the maiden 370  
 Swelled and obeyed its power, like the tremulous tides of the ocean.  
 Ah! she was fair, exceeding fair to behold, as she stood with  
 Naked snow-white feet on the gleaming floor of her chamber!  
 Little she dreamed that below, among the trees of the orchard,  
 Waited her lover and watched for the gleam of her lamp and her shadow. 375  
 Yet were her thoughts of him, and at times a feeling of sadness  
 Passed o'er her soul, as the sailing shade of clouds in the moonlight  
 Flitted across the floor and darkened the room for a moment.  
 And, as she gazed from the window, she saw serenely the moon pass  
 Forth from the folds of a cloud, and one star follow her footsteps, 380  
 As out of Abraham's tent young Ishmael wandered with Hagar!

## IV

Pleasantly rose next morn the sun on the village of Grand-Pré.  
 Pleasantly gleamed in the soft, sweet air the Basin of Minas,  
 Where the ships, with their wavering shadows, were riding at anchor.  
 Life had long been astir in the village, and clamorous labor 385  
 Knocked with its hundred hands at the golden gates of the morning.  
 Now from the country around, from the farms and neighboring hamlets,  
 Came in their holiday dresses the blithe Acadian peasants.  
 Many a glad good-morrow and jocund laugh from the young folk  
 Made the bright air brighter, as up from the numerous meadows, 390  
 Where no path could be seen but the track of wheels in the greensward,  
 Group after group appeared, and joined, or passed on the highway.  
 Long ere noon, in the village all sounds of labor were silenced.  
 Thronged were the streets with people; and noisy groups at the house-doors  
 Sat in the cheerful sun, and rejoiced and gossiped together. 395  
 Every house was an inn, where all were welcomed and feasted;  
 For with this simple people, who lived like brothers together,  
 All things were held in common, and what one had was another's.  
 Yet under Benedict's roof hospitality seemed more abundant:  
 For Evangeline stood among the guests of her father; 400  
 Bright was her face with smiles, and words of welcome and gladness  
 Fell from her beautiful lips, and blessed the cup as she gave it.

Under the open sky, in the odorous air of the orchard,  
 Stript of its golden fruit, was spread the feast of betrothal.  
 There in the shade of the porch were the priest and the notary seated; 405  
 There good Benedict sat, and sturdy Basil the blacksmith.  
 Not far withdrawn from these, by the cider-press and the beehives,



Michael the fiddler was placed, with the gayest of hearts and of waistcoats.  
 Shadow and light from the leaves alternately played on his snow-white  
 Hair, as it waved in the wind; and the jolly face of the fiddler 410  
 Glowed like a living coal when the ashes are blown from the embers.  
 Gayly the old man sang to the vibrant sound of his fiddle,  
*Tous les Bourgeois de Chartres*, and *Le Carillon de Dunkerque*,  
 And anon with his wooden shoes beat time to the music.  
 Merrily, merrily whirled the wheels of the dizzying dances 415  
 Under the orchard-trees and down the path to the meadows;  
 Old folk and young together, and children mingled among them.  
 Fairest of all the maids was Evangeline, Benedict's daughter!  
 Noblest of all the youths was Gabriel, son of the blacksmith!

So passed the morning away. And lo! with a summons sonorous 420  
 Sounded the bell from its tower, and over the meadows a drum beat.  
 Thronged ere long was the church with men. Without, in the churchyard,  
 Waited the women. They stood by the graves, and hung on the headstones  
 Garlands of autumn-leaves and evergreens fresh from the forest.  
 Then came the guard from the ships, and marching proudly among them 425  
 Entered the sacred portal. With loud and dissonant clangor  
 Echoed the sound of their brazen drums from ceiling and casement,—  
 Echoed a moment only, and slowly the ponderous portal  
 Closed, and in silence the crowd awaited the will of the soldiers.  
 Then uprose their commander, and spake from the steps of the altar, 430  
 Holding aloft in his hands, with its seals, the royal commission.  
 "You are convened this day," he said, "by His Majesty's orders.  
 Clement and kind has he been; but how you have answered his kindness  
 Let your own hearts reply! To my natural make and my temper 435  
 Painful the task is I do, which to you I know must be grievous.  
 Yet must I bow and obey, and deliver the will of our monarch:  
 Namely, that all your lands, and dwellings, and cattle of all kinds  
 Forfeited be to the crown; and that you yourselves from this province  
 Be transported to other lands. God grant you may dwell there  
 Ever as faithful subjects, a happy and peaceable people! 440  
 Prisoners now I declare you, for such is His Majesty's pleasure!"  
 As, when the air is serene in the sultry solstice of summer,  
 Suddenly gathers a storm, and the deadly sling of the hailstones  
 Beats down the farmer's corn in the field, and shatters his windows,  
 Hiding the sun, and strewing the ground with thatch from the house-roofs, 445  
 Bellowing fly the herds, and seek to break their enclosures;  
 So on the hearts of the people descended the words of the speaker.  
 Silent a moment they stood in speechless wonder, and then rose  
 Louder and ever louder a wail of sorrow and anger,  
 And, by one impulse moved, they madly rushed to the door-way. 450  
 Vain was the hope of escape; and cries and fierce imprecations  
 Rang through the house of prayer; and high o'er the head of the others

413. *Tous . . . Dunkerque*—Longfellow found these French airs in a *Recueil de cantiques à l'usage des missions*, Quebec, 1833. The first means: "All the Citizens of Chartres"; the second, "The Chimes of Dunkirk." 430. *commander*—The facts seem to be that the Acadians were removed at the order of New England colonies, and without consulting the English government. The commander was Lieutenant-Colonel John Winslow of Massachusetts, a fact which Longfellow has suppressed.

Rose, with his arms uplifted, the figure of Basil the blacksmith,  
 As, on a stormy sea, a spar is tossed by the billows.  
 Flushed was his face and distorted with passion; and wildly he shouted,— 455  
 “Down with the tyrants of England! we never have sworn them allegiance!  
 Death to these foreign soldiers, who seize on our homes and our harvests!”  
 More he fain would have said, but the merciless hand of a soldier  
 Smote him upon the mouth, and dragged him down to the pavement.

In the midst of the strife and tumult of angry contention, 460  
 Lo! the door of the chancel opened, and Father Felician  
 Entered, with serious mien, and ascended the steps of the altar.  
 Raising his reverend hand, with a gesture he awed into silence  
 All that clamorous throng; and thus he spake to his people;  
 Deep were his tones and solemn; in accents measured and mournful 465  
 Spake he, as, after the tocsin’s alarum, distinctly the clock strikes.  
 “What is this that ye do, my children? what madness has seized you?  
 Forty years of my life have I labored among you, and taught you,  
 Not in word alone, but in deed, to love one another?  
 Is this the fruit of my toils, of my vigils and prayers and privations? 470  
 Have you so soon forgotten all lessons of love and forgiveness?  
 This is the house of the Prince of Peace, and would you profane it  
 Thus with violent deeds and hearts overflowing with hatred?  
 Lo! where the crucified Christ from his cross is gazing upon you!  
 See! in those sorrowful eyes what meekness and holy compassion! 475  
 Hark! how those lips still repeat the prayer, ‘O Father, forgive them!’  
 Let us repeat that prayer in the hour when the wicked assail us,  
 Let us repeat it now, and say, ‘O Father, forgive them!’ ”  
 Few were his words of rebuke, but deep in the hearts of his people  
 Sank they, and sobs of contrition succeeded the passionate outbreak, 480  
 While they repeated his prayer, and said, “O Father, forgive them!”

Then came the evening service. The tapers gleamed from the altar.  
 Fervent and deep was the voice of the priest, and the people responded,  
 Not with their lips alone, but their hearts; and the Ave Maria  
 Sang they, and fell on their knees, and their souls, with devotion translated, 485  
 Rose on the ardor of prayer, like Elijah ascending to heaven.

Meanwhile had spread in the village the tidings of ill, and on all sides  
 Wandered, wailing, from house to house the women and children.  
 Long at her father’s door Evangeline stood, with her right hand  
 Shielding her eyes from the level rays of the sun, that, descending, 490  
 Lighted the village street with mysterious splendor, and roofed each  
 Peasant’s cottage with golden thatch, and emblazoned its windows.  
 Long within had been spread the snow-white cloth on the table;  
 There stood the wheaten loaf, and the honey fragrant with wild-flowers;  
 There stood the tankard of ale, and the cheese fresh brought from the dairy, 495  
 And, at the head of the board, the great arm-chair of the farmer.  
 Thus did Evangeline wait at her father’s door, as the sunset  
 Threw the long shadows of trees o’er the broad ambrosial meadows.

461. *chancel*—space near the altar, reserved for the clergy and the choir. 476. *O Father*—*Cf.* Luke 23:34. 484. *Ave Maria*—Hail, Mary—the beginning of the favorite prayer. 486. *Elijah*—*Cf.* II Kings 2:11. 498. *ambrosial*—about equivalent to “extremely pleasant.”

Ah! on her spirit within a deeper shadow had fallen,  
 And from the fields of her soul a fragrance celestial ascended,— 500  
 Charity, meekness, love, and hope, and forgiveness, and patience!  
 Then, all-forgetful of self, she wandered into the village,  
 Cheering with looks and words the mournful hearts of the women,  
 As o'er the darkening fields with lingering steps they departed,  
 Urged by their household cares, and the weary feet of their children. 505  
 Down sank the great red sun, and in golden, glimmering vapors  
 Veiled the light of his face, like the Prophet descending from Sinai.  
 Sweetly over the village the bell of the Angelus sounded.

Meanwhile amid the gloom, by the church Evangeline lingered.  
 All was silent within; and in vain at the door and the windows 510  
 Stood she, and listened and looked, until, overcome by emotion,  
 "Gabriel!" cried she aloud with tremulous voice; but no answer  
 Came from the graves of the dead, nor the gloomier grave of the living.  
 Slowly at length she returned to the tenantless house of her father.  
 Smouldered the fire on the hearth, on the board was the supper untasted, 515  
 Empty and drear was each room, and haunted with phantoms of terror.  
 Sadly echoed her step on the stair and the floor of her chamber.  
 In the dead of the night she heard the disconsolate rain fall  
 Loud on the withered leaves of the sycamore-tree by the window.  
 Keenly the lightning flashed; and the voice of the echoing thunder 520  
 Told her that God was in heaven, and governed the world he created!  
 Then she remembered the tale she had heard of the justice of Heaven;  
 Soothed was her troubled soul. and she peacefully slumbered till morning.

## v

Four times the sun had risen and set; and now on the fifth day  
 Cheerily called the cock to the sleeping maids of the farm-house. 525  
 Soon o'er the yellow fields, in silent and mournful procession,  
 Came from the neighboring hamlets and farms the Acadian women,  
 Driving in ponderous wains their household goods to the sea-shore,  
 Pausing and looking back to gaze once more on their dwellings,  
 Ere they were shut from sight by the winding road and the woodland. 530  
 Close at their sides their children ran, and urged on the oxen,  
 While in their little hands they clasped some fragments of playthings.

Thus to the Gaspereau's mouth they hurried; and there on the sea-beach  
 Piled in confusion lay the household goods of the peasants.  
 All day long between the shore and the ships did the boats ply; 535  
 All day long the wains came laboring down from the village.  
 Late in the afternoon, when the sun was near to his setting,  
 Echoed far o'er the fields came the roll of drums from the churchyard.  
 Thither the women and children thronged. On a sudden the church-doors  
 Opened, and forth came the guard, and marching in gloomy procession 540  
 Followed the long-imprisoned, but patient, Acadian farmers.  
 Even as pilgrims, who journey afar from their homes and their country,  
 Sing as they go, and in singing forget they are weary and wayworn,  
 So with songs on their lips the Acadian peasants descended

Down from the church to the shore, amid their wives and their daughters. 545  
 Foremost the young men came; and, raising together their voices,  
 Sang with tremulous lips a chant of the Catholic Missions:—  
 “Sacred heart of the Saviour! O inexhaustible fountain!  
 Fill our hearts this day with strength and submission and patience!”  
 Then the old men, as they marched, and the women that stood by the wayside 550  
 Joined in the sacred psalm, and the birds in the sunshine above them  
 Mingled their notes therewith, like voices of spirits departed.

Half-way down to the shore Evangeline waited in silence,  
 Not overcome with grief, but strong in the hour of affliction,—  
 Calmly and sadly she waited, until the procession approached her, 555  
 And she beheld the face of Gabriel pale with emotion.  
 Tears then filled her eyes, and, eagerly running to meet him,  
 Clasped she his hands, and laid her head on his shoulder, and whispered,—  
 “Gabriel, be of good cheer! for if we love one another  
 Nothing, in truth, can harm us, whatever mischances may happen!” 560  
 Smiling she spake these words; then suddenly paused, for her father  
 Saw she slowly advancing. Alas! how changed was his aspect!  
 Gone was the glow from his cheek, and the fire from his eye, and his footstep  
 Heavier seemed with the weight of the heavy heart in his bosom.  
 But with a smile and a sigh, she clasped his neck and embraced him, 565  
 Speaking words of endearment where words of comfort availed not.  
 Thus to the Gaspereau’s mouth moved on that mournful procession.

There disorder prevailed, and the tumult and stir of embarking.  
 Busily plied the freighted boats; and in the confusion  
 Wives were torn from their husbands, and mothers, too late, saw their children 570  
 Left on the land, extending their arms, with wildest entreaties.  
 So unto separate ships were Basil and Gabriel carried,  
 While in despair on the shore Evangeline stood with her father.  
 Half the task was not done when the sun went down, and the twilight  
 Deepened and darkened around; and in haste the reflux ocean 575  
 Fled away from the shore, and left the line of the sand-beach  
 Covered with waifs of the tide, with kelp and the slippery sea-weed.  
 Farther back in the midst of the household goods and the wagons,  
 Like to a gypsy camp, or a leaguer after a battle,  
 All escape cut off by the sea, and the sentinels near them, 580  
 Lay encamped for the night the houseless Acadian farmers.  
 Back to its nethermost caves retreated the bellowing ocean,  
 Dragging adown the beach the rattling pebbles, and leaving  
 Inland and far up the shore the stranded boats of the sailors.  
 Then, as the night descended, the herds returned from their pastures; 585  
 Sweet was the moist still air with the odor of milk from their udders;  
 Lowing they waited, and long, at the well-known bars of the farm-yard,—  
 Waited and looked in vain for the voice and the hand of the milkmaid.  
 Silence reigned in the streets; from the church no Angelus sounded,  
 Rose no smoke from the roofs, and gleamed no lights from the windows. 590

But on the shores meanwhile the evening fires had been kindled,  
 Built of the drift-wood thrown on the sands from wrecks in the tempest.

579. **leaguer**—camp, especially of a besieging army.

Round them shapes of gloom and sorrowful faces were gathered,  
 Voices of women were heard, and of men, and the crying of children.  
 Onward from fire to fire, as from hearth to hearth in his parish, 595  
 Wandered the faithful priest, consoling and blessing and cheering,  
 Like unto shipwrecked Paul on Melita's desolate sea-shore.  
 Thus he approached the place where Evangeline sat with her father,  
 And in the flickering light beheld the face of the old man,  
 Haggard and hollow and wan, and without either thought or emotion, 600  
 E'en as the face of a clock from which the hands have been taken.  
 Vainly Evangeline strove with words and caresses to cheer him,  
 Vainly offered him food; yet he moved not, he looked not, he spake not,  
 But, with a vacant stare, ever gazed at the flickering fire-light.  
 "*Benedicite!*" murmured the priest, in tones of compassion. 605  
 More he fain would have said, but his heart was full, and his accents  
 Faltered and paused on his lips, as the feet of a child on a threshold,  
 Hushed by the scene he beholds, and the awful presence of sorrow.  
 Silently, therefore, he laid his hand on the head of the maiden,  
 Raising his tearful eyes to the silent stars that above them 610  
 Moved on their way, unperturbed by the wrongs and sorrows of mortals.  
 Then sat he down at her side, and they wept together in silence.

Suddenly rose from the south a light, as in autumn the blood-red  
 Moon climbs the crystal walls of heaven, and o'er the horizon  
 Titan-like stretches its hundred hands upon mountain and meadow, 615  
 Seizing the rocks and the rivers, and piling huge shadows together.  
 Broader and ever broader it gleamed on the roofs of the village,  
 Gleamed on the sky and the sea, and the ships that lay in the roadstead.  
 Columns of shining smoke uprose, and flashes of flame were  
 Thrust through their folds and withdrawn, like the quivering hands of a martyr. 620  
 Then as the wind seized the gleeds and the burning thatch, and, uplifting,  
 Whirled them aloft through the air, at once from a hundred house-tops  
 Started the sheeted smoke with flashes of flame intermingled.

These things beheld in dismay the crowd on the shore and on shipboard.  
 Speechless at first they stood, then cried aloud in their anguish, 625  
 "We shall behold no more our homes in the village of Grand-Pré!"  
 Loud on a sudden the cocks began to crow in the farm-yards,  
 Thinking the day had dawned; and anon the lowing of cattle  
 Came on the evening breeze, by the barking of dogs interrupted.  
 Then rose a sound of dread, such as startles the sleeping encampments 630  
 Far in the western prairies or forests that skirt the Nebraska,  
 When the wild horses affrighted sweep by with the speed of the whirlwind,  
 Or the loud bellowing herds of buffaloes rush to the river.  
 Such was the sound that arose on the night, as the herds and the horses  
 Broke through their folds and fences, and madly rushed o'er the meadows. 635

Overwhelmed with the sight, yet speechless, the priest and the maiden  
 Gazed on the scene of terror that reddened and widened before them;  
 And as they turned at length to speak to their silent companion,

597. Paul—Cf. Acts 28: 1-10. 605. "*Benedicite*"—"Blessings upon you!" 615. Titan-like  
 —loose reference to Briareus, a giant with a hundred hands. 621. gleeds—coals.

Lo! from his seat he had fallen, and stretched abroad on the sea-shore  
 Motionless lay his form, from which the soul had departed. 640  
 Slowly the priest uplifted the lifeless head, and the maiden  
 Knelt at her father's side, and wailed aloud in her terror.  
 Then in a swoon she sank, and lay with her head on his bosom.  
 Through the long night she lay in deep, oblivious slumber;  
 And when she awoke from the trance, she beheld a multitude near her. 645  
 Faces of friends she beheld, that were mournfully gazing upon her,  
 Pallid, with tearful eyes, and looks of saddest compassion.  
 Still the blaze of the burning village illumined the landscape,  
 Reddened the sky overhead, and gleamed on the faces around her,  
 And like the day of doom it seemed to her wavering senses. 650  
 Then a familiar voice she heard, as it said to the people,—  
 "Let us bury him here by the sea. When a happier season  
 Brings us again to our homes from the unknown land of our exile,  
 Then shall his sacred dust be piously laid in the churchyard."  
 Such were the words of the priest. And there in haste by the seaside, 655  
 Having the glare of the burning village for funeral torches,  
 But without bell or book, they buried the farmer of Grand-Pré.  
 And as the voice of the priest repeated the service of sorrow,  
 Lo! with a mournful sound, like the voice of a vast congregation,  
 Solemnly answered the sea, and mingled its roar with the dirges. 660  
 'Twas the returning tide, that afar from the waste of the ocean,  
 With the first dawn of the day, came heaving and hurrying landward.  
 Then recommenced once more the stir and noise of embarking;  
 And with the ebb of the tide the ships sailed out of the harbor,  
 Leaving behind them the dead on the shore, and the village in ruins. 665

[End of Part the First]

In the second part of the poem *Evangeline* and Father Felician wander to Louisiana in search of Basil and Gabriel, who, however, pass them on the Mississippi without knowing it. *Evangeline* then pursues her lover into the Far West, but always they fail to meet. Finally she returns to Philadelphia, becomes a nurse during the pestilence, and finds Gabriel dying of yellow fever.

## THE SECRET OF THE SEA

Sails of silk and ropes of sandal,  
 Such as gleam in ancient lore;  
 And the singing of the sailors,  
 And the answer from the shore!

5

Written in 1848 and published in *The Seaside and the Fireside* (1849).

Ah! what pleasant visions haunt me  
 As I gaze upon the sea!  
 All the old romantic legends,  
 All my dreams, come back to me.

Most of all, the Spanish ballad  
 Haunts me oft, and tarries long,  
 Of the noble Count Arnaldos  
 And the sailor's mystic song.

10

657. without bell or book—without tolling of bells and without the service book of the Church. 5. sandal—a silken material. The whole line is literally translated from the Spanish ballad. 11. Arnaldos—The *Romance del Conde Arnaldos* is one of the most musical of the traditional popular ballads of Spain. Lines 17-32 are a free rendering of the original.

Like the long waves on a sea-beach,  
Where the sand as silver shines,  
With a soft, monotonous cadence,  
Flow its unrhymed lyric lines;—

15

Telling how the Count Arnaldos,  
With his hawk upon his hand,  
Saw a fair and stately galley,  
Steering onward to the land;—

20

How he heard the ancient helmsman  
Chant a song so wild and clear,  
That the sailing sea-bird slowly  
Poised upon the mast to hear,

Till his soul was full of longing,  
And he cried, with impulse strong,—  
“Helmsman! for the love of heaven,  
Teach me, too, that wondrous song!”

25

“Wouldst thou,”—so the helmsman answered,  
“Learn the secret of the sea?  
Only those who brave its dangers  
Comprehend its mystery!”

30

In each sail that skims the horizon,  
In each landward-blowing breeze,  
I behold that stately galley,  
Hear those mournful melodies;

35

Till my soul is full of longing  
For the secret of the sea,  
And the heart of the great ocean  
Sends a thrilling pulse through me.

40

### SIR HUMPHREY GILBERT

Written in 1848, and, after periodical publication, incorporated in *The Seaside and the Fireside* (1849). Sir Humphrey Gilbert (1539?-1583), half-brother of Sir Walter Raleigh, landed at St. John's, Newfoundland, August 5, 1583. On the night of September 9 during the return voyage, his ship, the *Squirrel*, suddenly disappeared, as reported by those sailing in the accompanying vessel, the *Golden Hind*. Longfellow drew his account from Hakluyt, *The Principal Naviga-*

*tions, Voyages, and Discoveries of the English Nation*. Hakluyt, however, does not at tribute the disaster to ice.

Southward with fleet of ice  
Sailed the corsair Death;  
Wild and fast blew the blast,  
And the east-wind was his breath.

His lordly ships of ice  
Glistened in the sun;  
On each side, like pennons wide,  
Flashing crystal streamlets run.

5

His sails of white sea-mist  
Dripped with silver rain;  
But where he passed there were cast  
Leaden shadows o'er the main.

10

Eastward from Campobello  
Sir Humphrey Gilbert sailed;  
Three days or more seaward he bore,  
Then, alas! the land-wind failed.

15

Alas! the land-wind failed,  
And ice-cold grew the night;  
And never more, on sea or shore,  
Should Sir Humphrey see the light.

20

He sat upon the deck,  
The Book was in his hand;  
“Do not fear! Heaven is as near,”  
He said, “by water as by land!”

In the first watch of the night,  
Without a signal's sound,  
Out of the sea, mysteriously,  
The fleet of Death rose all around.

25

The moon and the evening star  
Were hanging in the shrouds;  
Every mast, as it passed,  
Seemed to rake the passing clouds.

30

They grappled with their prize,  
At midnight black and cold!  
As of a rock was the shock;  
Heavily the ground-swell rolled.

35

Southward through day and dark,  
 They drift in close embrace,  
 With mist and rain, to the Spanish Main;  
 Yet there seems no change of place. 40

Southward, forever southward,  
 They drift through dark and day;  
 And like a dream, in the Gulf-Stream  
 Sinking, vanish all away.

For what are all our contrivings,  
 And the wisdom of our books, 30  
 When compared with your caresses,  
 And the gladness of your looks?

Ye are better than all the ballads  
 That ever were sung or said;  
 For ye are living poems, 35  
 And all the rest are dead.

## CHILDREN

Written in 1849, published in the *Courtship of Miles Standish* volume (1858).

Come to me, O ye children!  
 For I hear you at your play,  
 And the questions that perplexed me  
 Have vanished quite away.

Ye open the eastern windows, 5  
 That look towards the sun,  
 Where thoughts are singing swallows,  
 And the brooks of morning run.

In your hearts are the birds and the sunshine,  
 In your thoughts the brooklet's flow, 10  
 But in mine is the wind of Autumn  
 And the first fall of the snow.

Ah! what would the world be to us  
 If the children were no more?  
 We should dread the desert behind us 15  
 Worse than the dark before.

What the leaves are to the forest,  
 With light and air for food,  
 Ere their sweet and tender juices  
 Have been hardened into wood,— 20

That to the world are children;  
 Through them it feels the glow  
 Of a brighter and sunnier climate  
 Than reaches the trunks below.

Come to me, O ye children! 25  
 And whisper in my ear  
 What the birds and the winds are singing  
 In your sunny atmosphere.

## THE BUILDING OF THE SHIP

Written June-September, 1849, and published as the leading poem in *The Seaside and the Fireside* (1849). The form of the poem was suggested by Schiller's *The Song of the Bell*; the content, with its symbolical hints of the building of the nation, is expressive of Longfellow's anxiety over the darkening political situation.

"Build me straight, O worthy Master!  
 Stanch and strong, a goodly vessel,  
 That shall laugh at all disaster,  
 And with wave and whirlwind wrestle!"

The merchant's word 5  
 Delighted the Master heard;  
 For his heart was in his work, and the heart  
 Giveth grace unto every Art.  
 A quiet smile played round his lips,  
 As the eddies and dimples of the tide 10  
 Play round the bows of ships  
 That steadily at anchor ride.

And with a voice that was full of glee,  
 He answered, "Erelong we will launch  
 A vessel as goodly, and strong, and stanch, 15  
 As ever weathered a wintry sea!"

And first with nicest skill and art,  
 Perfect and finished in every part,  
 A little model the Master wrought,  
 Which should be to the larger plan 20  
 What the child is to the man,

Its counterpart in miniature;  
 That with a hand more swift and sure  
 The greater labor might be brought  
 To answer to his inward thought. 25



And as he labored, his mind ran o'er  
 The various ships that were built of yore,  
 And above them all, and strangest of all  
 Towered the Great Harry, crank and tall,  
 Whose picture was hanging on the wall, 30  
 With bows and stern raised high in air,  
 And balconies hanging here and there,  
 And signal lanterns and flags afloat,  
 And eight round towers, like those that frown  
 From some old castle, looking down 35  
 Upon the drawbridge and the moat.  
 And he said with a smile, "Our ship, I wis,  
 Shall be of another form than this!"  
 It was of another form, indeed;  
 Built for freight, and yet for speed, 40  
 A beautiful and gallant craft;  
 Broad in the beam, that the stress of the blast,  
 Pressing down upon sail and mast,  
 Might not the sharp bows overwhelm;  
 Broad in the beam, but sloping aft 45  
 With graceful curve and slow degrees,  
 That she might be docile to the helm,  
 And that the currents of parted seas,  
 Closing behind, with mighty force,  
 Might aid and not impede her course. 50

In the ship-yard stood the Master,  
 With the model of the vessel,  
 That should laugh at all disaster,  
 And with wave and whirlwind wrestle!  
 Covering many a rood of ground, 55  
 Lay the timber piled around;  
 Timber of chestnut, and elm, and oak,  
 And scattered here and there, with these,  
 The knarred and crooked cedar knees;  
 Brought from regions far away, 60  
 From Pascagoula's sunny bay,  
 And the banks of the roaring Roanoke!  
 Ah! what a wondrous thing it is  
 To note how many wheels of toil  
 One thought, one word, can set in motion! 65  
 There's not a ship that sails the ocean,  
 But every climate, every soil,  
 Must bring its tribute, great or small,  
 And help to build the wooden wall!

The sun was rising o'er the sea, 70  
 And long the level shadows lay,

As if they, too, the beams would be  
 Of some great, airy argosy,  
 Framed and launched in a single day.  
 That silent architect, the sun, 75  
 Had hewn and laid them every one,  
 Ere the work of man was yet begun.  
 Beside the Master, when he spoke,  
 A youth, against an anchor leaning,  
 Listened, to catch his slightest meaning, 80  
 Only the long waves, as they broke  
 In ripples on the pebbly beach,  
 Interrupted the old man's speech.  
 Beautiful they were, in sooth,  
 The old man and the fiery youth! 85  
 The old man, in whose busy brain  
 Many a ship that sailed the main  
 Was modelled o'er and o'er again;—  
 The fiery youth, who was to be  
 The heir of his dexterity, 90  
 The heir of his house, and his daughter's  
 hand,  
 When he had built and launched from land  
 What the elder head had planned.

"Thus," said he, "will we build this ship!  
 Lay square the blocks upon the slip, 95  
 And follow well this plan of mine.  
 Choose the timbers with greatest care;  
 Of all that is unsound beware;  
 For only what is sound and strong  
 To this vessel shall belong. 100  
 Cedar of Maine and Georgia pine  
 Here together shall combine.  
 A goodly frame, and a goodly fame,  
 And the UNION be her name!  
 For the day that gives her to the sea 105  
 Shall give my daughter unto thee!"

The Master's word  
 Enraptured the young man heard;  
 And as he turned his face aside,  
 With a look of joy and a thrill of pride 110  
 Standing before  
 Her father's door,  
 He saw the form of his promised bride.  
 The sun shone on her golden hair,  
 And her cheek was glowing fresh and fair, 115  
 With the breath of morn and the soft sea air.

29. **Great Harry**—the famous ship of Henry VII of England, built in 1488 and accurately described in the following lines. 59. **knarred**—knotty. 61. **Pascagoula's**—river in Mississippi. 62. **Roanoke**—The Roanoke River rises in Virginia and flows through North Carolina to the sea, but it is scarcely a "roaring" river. 95. **slip**—the inclined plane on which a vessel is built.

Like a beauteous barge was she,  
 Still at rest on the sandy beach,  
 Just beyond the billow's reach;  
 But he  
 Was the restless, seething, stormy sea! 120  
 Ah, how skilful grows the hand  
 That obeyeth Love's command!  
 It is the heart, and not the brain,  
 That to the highest doth attain, 125  
 And he who followeth Love's behest  
 Far excelleth all the rest!

Thus with the rising of the sun  
 Was the noble task begun,  
 And soon throughout the ship-yard's bounds  
 Were heard the intermingled sounds 131  
 Of axes and of mallets, plied  
 With vigorous arms on every side;  
 Plied so deftly and so well,  
 That, ere the shadows of evening fell, 135  
 The keel of oak for a noble ship,  
 Scarfed and bolted, straight and strong,  
 Was lying ready, and stretched along  
 The blocks, well placed upon the slip.  
 Happy, thrice happy, every one 140  
 Who sees his labor well begun,  
 And not perplexed and multiplied,  
 By idly waiting for time and tide!

And when the hot, long day was o'er,  
 The young man at the Master's door 145  
 Sat with the maiden calm and still,  
 And within the porch, a little more  
 Removed beyond the evening chill  
 The father sat, and told them tales  
 Of wrecks in the great September gales, 150  
 Of pirates coasting the Spanish Main,  
 And ships that never came back again,  
 The chance and change of a sailor's life,  
 Want and plenty, rest and strife,  
 His roving fancy, like the wind, 155  
 That nothing can stay and nothing can bind.  
 And the magic charm of foreign lands,  
 With shadows of palms, and shining sands,  
 Where the tumbling surf,  
 O'er the coral reefs of Madagascar, 160

Washes the feet of the swarthy Lascar,  
 As he lies alone and asleep on the turf.  
 And the trembling maiden held her breath  
 At the tales of that awful, pitiless sea,  
 With all its terror and mystery, 165  
 The dim, dark sea, so like unto Death,  
 That divides and yet unites mankind!  
 And whenever the old man paused, a gleam  
 From the bowl of his pipe would awhile  
 illumine  
 The silent group in the twilight gloom, 170  
 And thoughtful faces, as in a dream;  
 And for a moment one might mark  
 What had been hidden by the dark,  
 That the head of the maiden lay at rest,  
 Tenderly, on the young man's breast! 175

Day by day the vessel grew,  
 With timbers fashioned strong and true,  
 Stemson and keelson and sternson-knee,  
 Till, framed with perfect symmetry,  
 A skeleton ship rose up to view! 180  
 And around the bows and along the side  
 The heavy hammers and mallets plied,  
 Till after many a week, at length,  
 Wonderful for form and strength,  
 Sublime in its enormous bulk, 185  
 Loomed aloft the shadowy hulk!  
 And around it columns of smoke, upwreath-  
 ing,  
 Rose from the boiling, bubbling, seething  
 Caldron, that glowed,  
 And overflowed 190  
 With the black tar, heated for the sheathing.  
 And amid the clamors  
 Of clattering hammers,  
 He who listened heard now and then  
 The song of the Master and his men:— 195

"Build me straight, O worthy Master,  
 Stanch and strong, a goodly vessel,  
 That shall laugh at all disaster,  
 And with wave and whirlwind wrestle!"

With oaken brace and copper band, 200  
 Lay the rudder on the sand,

137. **scarfed**—A scarf joint is a joint by which two timbers are connected lengthwise into a continuous piece, the ends being cut so as to overlap and fit into each other. 161. **Lascar**—an East Indian sailor. 178. **Stemson . . . keelson . . . sternson-knee**—The stemson is a curved timber fixed in the after part of a ship and scarfed to the keelson, a line of jointed timbers laid along the middle of the floor timbers over the keel and continued into the sternson knee, to which the stern post is fixed.

That, like a thought, should have control  
 Over the movement of the whole;  
 And near it the anchor, whose giant hand  
 Would reach down and grapple with the  
     land, 205  
 And immovable and fast  
 Hold the great ship against the bellowing  
     blast!  
 And at the bows an image stood,  
 By a cunning artist carved in wood,  
 With robes of white, that far behind 210  
 Seemed to be fluttering in the wind.  
 It was not shaped in a classic mould,  
 Not like a Nymph or Goddess of old,  
 Or Naiad rising from the water,  
 But modelled from the Master's daughter! 215  
 On many a dreary and misty night,  
 'Twill be seen by the rays of the signal light,  
 Speeding along through the rain and the dark,  
 Like a ghost in its snow-white sark,  
 The pilot of some phantom bark, 220  
 Guiding the vessel, in its flight,  
 By a path none other knows aright!

Behold, at last,  
 Each tall and tapering mast  
 Is swung into its place; 225  
 Shrouds and stays  
 Holding it firm and fast!

Long ago,  
 In the deer-haunted forests of Maine,  
 When upon mountain and plain 230  
 Lay the snow,  
 They fell,—those lordly pines!  
 Those grand, majestic pines!  
 'Mid shouts and cheers  
 The jaded steers, 235  
 Panting beneath the goad,  
 Dragged down the weary, winding road  
 Those captive kings so straight and tall,  
 To be shorn of their streaming hair,  
 And naked and bare, 240

To feel the stress and the strain  
 Of the wind and the reeling main,  
 Whose roar  
 Would remind them forevermore  
 Of their native forests they should not see  
     again. 245  
 And everywhere  
 The slender, graceful spars  
 Poise aloft in the air,  
 And at the mast-head,  
 White, blue, and red, 250  
 A flag unrolls the stripes and stars.  
 Ah! when the wanderer, lonely, friendless,  
 In foreign harbors shall behold  
 That flag unrolled,  
 'Twill be as a friendly hand 255  
 Stretched out from his native land,  
 Filling his heart with memories sweet and  
     endless!

All is finished! and at length  
 Has come the bridal day  
 Of beauty and of strength. 260  
 To-day the vessel shall be launched!  
 With fleecy clouds the sky is blanched,  
 And o'er the bay,  
 Slowly, in all his splendors dight,  
 The great sun rises to behold the sight. 265

The ocean old,  
 Centuries old,  
 Strong as youth, and as uncontrolled,  
 Paces restless to and fro,  
 Up and down the sands of gold. 270  
 His beating heart is not at rest;  
 And far and wide,  
 With ceaseless flow,  
 His beard of snow  
 Heaves with the heaving of his breast. 275  
 He waits impatient for his bride.  
 There she stands,  
 With her foot upon the sands,

219. sark—shroud. 227. "I wish to anticipate a criticism on this passage, by stating that sometimes, though not usually, vessels are launched fully sparred and rigged. I have availed myself of the exception as better suited to my purpose than the general rule; but the reader will see that it is neither a blunder nor a poetic license. On this subject a friend in Portland, Maine, writes me thus: 'In this State, and also, I am told, in New York, ships are sometimes rigged upon the stocks, in order to save time, and to make a show. There was a fine large ship launched last summer at Ellsworth, fully sparred and rigged. Some years ago a ship was launched here, with her rigging, spars, sails, and cargo aboard. She sailed the next day and—was never heard of again! I hope this will not be the fate of your poem!'" (Longfellow's note)

Decked with flags and streamers gay,  
 In honor of her marriage day, 280  
 Her snow-white signals fluttering, blending,  
 Round her like a veil descending,  
 Ready to be  
 The bride of the gray old sea.

On the deck another bride 285  
 Is standing by her lover's side.  
 Shadows from the flags and shrouds,  
 Like the shadows cast by clouds,  
 Broken by many a sudden fleck,  
 Fall around them on the deck. 290

The prayer is said,  
 The service read,  
 The joyous bridegroom bows his head;  
 And in tears the good old Master  
 Shakes the brown hand of his son, 295  
 Kisses his daughter's glowing cheek  
 In silence, for he cannot speak,  
 And ever faster  
 Down his own the tears begin to run.  
 The worthy pastor— 300  
 The shepherd of that wandering flock,  
 That has the ocean for its wold,  
 That has the vessel for its fold,  
 Leaping ever from rock to rock—  
 Spake, with accents mild and clear, 305  
 Words of warning, words of cheer,  
 But tedious to the bridegroom's ear.  
 He knew the chart  
 Of the sailor's heart,  
 All its pleasures and its griefs, 310  
 All its shallows and rocky reefs,  
 All those secret currents, that flow  
 With such resistless undertow,  
 And lift and drift, with terrible force,  
 The will from its moorings and its course. 315  
 Therefore he spake, and thus said he:—  
 "Like unto ships far off at sea,  
 Outward or homeward bound, are we.  
 Before, behind, and all around,  
 Floats and swings the horizon's bound, 320  
 Seems at its distant rim to rise  
 And climb the crystal wall of the skies,  
 And then again to turn and sink,  
 As if we could slide from its outer brink.

Ah! it is not the sea, 325  
 It is not the sea that sinks and shelves,  
 But ourselves  
 That rock and rise  
 With endless and uneasy motion,  
 Now touching the very skies, 330  
 Now sinking into the depths of ocean.  
 Ah! if our souls but poise and swing  
 Like the compass in its brazen ring,  
 Ever level and ever true  
 To the toil and the task we have to do, 335  
 We shall sail securely, and safely reach  
 The Fortunate Isles, on whose shining beach  
 The sights we see, and the sounds we hear,  
 Will be those of joy and not of fear!"

Then the Master, 340  
 With a gesture of command,  
 Waved his hand;  
 And at the word,  
 Loud and sudden there was heard,  
 All around them and below, 345  
 The sound of hammers, blow on blow,  
 Knocking away the shores and spurs.  
 And see! she stirs!  
 She starts,—she moves,—she seems to feel  
 The thrill of life along her keel, 350  
 And, spurning with her foot the ground,  
 With one exulting, joyous bound,  
 She leaps into the ocean's arms!

And lo! from the assembled crowd  
 There rose a shout, prolonged and loud, 355  
 That to the ocean seemed to say,  
 "Take her, O bridegroom, old and gray,  
 Take her to thy protecting arms,  
 With all her youth and all her charms!"

How beautiful she is! How fair 360  
 She lies within those arms, that press  
 Her form with many a soft caress  
 Of tenderness and watchful care!  
 Sail forth into the sea, O ship!  
 Through wind and wave, right onward  
 steer! 365  
 The moistened eye, the trembling lip,  
 Are not the signs of doubt or fear.

300. *pastor*—The character of the pastor, together with his sermon, is vaguely reminiscent of Father Taylor, the famous sailors' preacher, who also figures in Chap. VIII of Melville's *Moby Dick*. 347. *shores and spurs*—braces and props for holding the vessel upright before it is launched.

Sail forth into the sea of life,  
 O gentle, loving, trusting wife,  
 And safe from all adversity 370  
 Upon the bosom of that sea  
 Thy comings and thy goings be!  
 For gentleness and love and trust  
 Prevail o'er angry wave and gust;  
 And in the wreck of noble lives 375  
 Something immortal still survives!

Thou, too, sail on, O Ship of State!  
 Sail on, O UNION, strong and great!  
 Humanity with all its fears,  
 With all the hopes of future years, 380  
 Is hanging breathless on thy fate!  
 We know what Master laid thy keel,  
 What Workmen wrought thy ribs of steel,  
 Who made each mast, and sail, and rope,  
 What anvils rang, what hammers beat, 385  
 In what a forge and what a heat  
 Were shaped the anchors of thy hope!  
 Fear not each sudden sound and shock,  
 'Tis of the wave and not the rock;  
 'Tis but the flapping of the sail, 390  
 And not a rent made by the gale!  
 In spite of rock and tempest's roar,  
 In spite of false lights on the shore,  
 Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea!  
 Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee, 395  
 Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,  
 Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,  
 Are all with thee,—are all with thee!

### MY LOST YOUTH

Written in 1855, published in *Putnam's Monthly*, August, 1855, and collected into the *Courtship of Miles Standish* volume (1858). The first seeds of the poem were sown during a visit to Portland in 1846. During an illness in March, 1855, his thoughts recurred to "a memory of Portland,—my native town, the city by the sea," and he wrote the poem, noting in his diary that I "am rather pleased with it, and with the bringing in of the two lines of the old Lapland song,

"A youth's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

The collected *Works* gives the song as occurring in John Scheffer, *The History of Lapland*, Oxford, 1674, and the significant passage as:

"A youth's desire is the desire of the wind,  
 All his essaies  
 Are long delaies,  
 No issue can they find."

Often I think of the beautiful town  
 That is seated by the sea;  
 Often in thought go up and down  
 The pleasant streets of that dear old town,  
 And my youth comes back to me. 5  
 And a verse of a Lapland song  
 Is haunting my memory still:  
 "A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees, 10  
 And catch, in sudden gleams,  
 The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,  
 And islands that were the Hesperides  
 Of all my boyish dreams.  
 And the burden of that old song, 15  
 It murmurs and whispers still:  
 "A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the black wharves and the slips,  
 And the sea-tides tossing free; 20  
 And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,  
 And the beauty and mystery of the ships,  
 And the magic of the sea.

And the voice of that wayward song  
 Is singing and saying still: 25  
 "A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,  
 And the fort upon the hill;  
 The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar 30  
 The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,  
 And the bugle wild and shrill.  
 And the music of that old song  
 Throbs in my memory still:  
 "A boy's will is the wind's will, 35

And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
thoughts."

I remember the sea-fight far away,  
How it thundered o'er the tide!  
And the dead captains, as they lay  
In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil  
bay 40  
Where they in battle died.  
And the sound of that mournful song  
Goes through me with a thrill:  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
thoughts." 45

I can see the breezy dome of groves,  
The shadows of Deering's Woods;  
And the friendships old and the early loves  
Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves  
In quiet neighborhoods. 50  
And the verse of that sweet old song,  
It flutters and murmurs still:  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
thoughts."

I remember the gleams and glooms that  
dart 55  
Across the school-boy's brain;  
The song and the silence in the heart,  
That in part are prophecies, and in part  
Are longings wild and vain.  
And the voice of that fitful song 60  
Sings on, and is never still:  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
thoughts."

There are things of which I may not speak;  
There are dreams that cannot die; 65  
There are thoughts that make the strong heart  
weak,  
And bring a pallor into the cheek,  
And a mist before the eye.  
And the words of that fatal song  
Come over me like a chill: 70  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
thoughts."

Strange to me now are the forms I meet  
When I visit the dear old town;  
But the native air is pure and sweet, 75  
And the trees that o'ershadow each well-  
known street,  
As they balance up and down,  
Are singing the beautiful song,  
Are sighing and whispering still:  
"A boy's will is the wind's will, 80  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
thoughts."

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,  
And with joy that is almost pain  
My heart goes back to wander there,  
And among the dreams of the days that  
were, 85  
I find my lost youth again.  
And the strange and beautiful song,  
The groves are repeating it still:  
"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
thoughts."

## SANDALPHON

Written in 1858 and published in the  
*Courtship of Miles Standish* volume (1858).  
In Longfellow's *Diary* one reads (November  
2, 1857): "In the evening, Scherb read to me  
some curious Talmudic legends from Cor-  
rodi's *Chiliasmus*,—of the great angel Sandal-  
phon, and the Feast of the Leviathan; at  
which feast this great fish is to be served up."  
In the collected *Works* the following selec-  
tions from J. P. Stehelin, *The Traditions of  
the Jews* are quoted as being marked by the  
poet and evidently furnishing the material  
upon which he based his poem:

"Rabbi Eliezer hath said: 'There is an  
Angel who standeth on earth and reacheth  
with his head to the door of Heaven. It is  
taught in the Mishna that he is called  
Sandalphon.' . . .

"There are three [angels] who weave or  
make garlands out of the prayers of the  
Israelites . . . the third is Sandalphon. . .

37. *sea-fight*—This refers to an engagement between the British brig *Boxer*, and the American  
brig *Enterprise*, fought off the harbor of Portland in 1813. The captains of both ships were killed,  
and were buried side by side in the cemetery on Mountjoy. The *Enterprise* won the encounter.

"There be Angels which are of Wind and  
there be Angels which are of Fire. . . .

"The holy and blessed God creates every  
day a multitude of angels in heaven, who,  
after they have sung a hymn before Him, do  
perish . . . Except Michael and Gabriel . . .  
and Sandalphon and their equals, who re-  
main in their glory wherewith they were in-  
vested in the six days' creation. . . .

"The prophet Elias is the Angel Sandal-  
phon, who twisteth or bindeth garlands out  
of the prayers, for his Lord."

Have you read in the Talmud of old,  
In the Legends the Rabbins have told  
Of the limitless realms of the air,  
Have you read it,—the marvellous story  
Of Sandalphon, the Angel of Glory, 5  
Sandalphon, the Angel of Prayer?

How, erect, at the outermost gates  
Of the City Celestial he waits,  
With his feet on the ladder of light,  
That, crowded with angels unnumbered, 10  
By Jacob was seen, as he slumbered  
Alone in the desert at night?

The Angels of Wind and of Fire  
Chant only one hymn, and expire 15  
With the song's irresistible stress;  
Expire in their rapture and wonder,  
As harp-strings are broken asunder  
By music they throb to express.

But serene in the rapturous throng,  
Unmoved by the rush of the song, 20  
With eyes unimpassioned and slow,  
Among the dead angels, the deathless  
Sandalphon stands listening breathless  
To sounds that ascend from below;—

From the spirits on earth that adore, 25  
From the souls that entreat and implore  
In the fervor and passion of prayer;  
From the hearts that are broken with losses,  
And weary with dragging the crosses  
Too heavy for mortals to bear. 30

And he gathers the prayers as he stands,  
And they change into flowers in his hands,

Into garlands of purple and red;  
And beneath the great arch of the portal,  
Through the streets of the City Immortal 35  
Is wafted the fragrance they shed.

It is but a legend, I know,—  
A fable, a phantom, a show,  
Of the ancient Rabbinical lore;  
Yet the old mediaeval tradition, 40  
The beautiful, strange superstition,  
But haunts me and holds me the more.

When I look from my window at night,  
And the welkin above is all white,  
All throbbing and panting with stars, 45  
Among them majestic is standing  
Sandalphon the angel, expanding  
His pinions in nebulous bars.

And the legend, I feel, is a part  
Of the hunger and thirst of the heart, 50  
The frenzy and fire of the brain,  
That grasps at the fruitage forbidden,  
The golden pomegranates of Eden,  
To quiet its fever and pain.

## THE SAGA OF KING OLAF

"The Challenge of Thor" was written  
about 1849 as part of the *Christus*, and later  
transferred to "The Saga of King Olaf,"  
composed 1859-60, which as a whole was  
finally incorporated in *Tales of a Wayside*  
*Inn* (1863). The saga is based upon Long-  
fellow's reading of the *Heimskringla* (or at  
least of "King Olaf Trygvesson's Saga") by  
Snorre Sturlason (1178-1241) as translated  
by Samuel Laing in 1844. Longfellow's poem  
is in twenty-two sections, from which selec-  
tions illustrating Olaf's character, his loves,  
and his death have been chosen for inclusion  
here.

### I

#### THE CHALLENGE OF THOR

Longfellow originally intended this as the  
prologue to the second part of his *Christus*  
(1872). Its complement in thought is the

1. Talmud—the collection of Jewish laws not included in the Pentateuch. 2. Rabbins—  
rabbis. 11. Jacob—Cf. Gen. 28: 11-15. 44. welkin—sky.

"Finale" to that poem, spoken by St. John.  
The god Thor, with his war-hammer, Miöl-  
ner, is the embodiment of force, whereas St.  
John sets forth the Christian doctrine of love.

And thus single-handed  
Unto the combat, 40  
Gauntlet or Gospel,  
Here I defy thee!

I am the God Thor,  
I am the War God,  
I am the Thunderer!  
Here in my Northland,  
My fastness and fortress,  
Reign I forever!

Here amid icebergs  
Rule I the nations;  
This is my hammer,  
Miölner the mighty;  
Giants and sorcerers  
Cannot withstand it!

These are the gauntlets  
Wherewith I wield it,  
And hurl it afar off;  
This is my girdle;  
Whenever I brace it,  
Strength is redoubled!

The light thou beholdest  
Stream through the heavens,  
In flashes of crimson,  
Is but my red beard  
Blown by the night-wind,  
Affrighting the nations!

Jove is my brother;  
Mine eyes are the lightning;  
The wheels of my chariot  
Roll in the thunder,  
The blows of my hammer  
Ring in the earthquake!

Force rules the world still,  
Has ruled it, shall rule it;  
Meekness is weakness,  
Strength is triumphant,  
Over the whole earth  
Still is it Thor's-Day!

Thou art a God too,  
O Galilean!

## II

## KING OLAF'S RETURN

For an understanding of the poem it is  
necessary to know something of the life of  
Olaf Trygvesson (968-1000), King of Nor-  
way. After the murder of his father, his  
mother, Astrid, fled to hiding, and gave birth  
to her son on a small island in a Norse lake.  
Mother and boy then fled to Sweden, closely  
pursued; afterwards, when Astrid tried to  
rejoin her brother, Sigurd, then in the  
service of King Valdemar of Russia, mother  
and child were captured by Esthonian vikings  
and separated. When Olaf was nine he was  
recognized in a market place in Esthonia by  
Sigurd, as related in the poem, and, after  
killing his master, fled to Russia, where he  
remained nine years in the court of King  
Valdemar. Finding that Valdemar's friend-  
ship was cooling, he took ship, went to Vend-  
land, married Queen Geyra, conquered and  
plundered widely, and in 994 was baptized  
a Christian. After sundry adventures, he  
sailed north by way of the Orkney Islands  
to reconquer his kingdom of Norway. He  
is the Havelock the Dane of English tradi-  
tion.

And King Olaf heard the cry,  
Saw the red light in the sky,  
Laid his hand upon his sword,  
As he leaned upon the railing,  
And his ships went sailing, sailing 5  
Northward into Drontheim fiord.

There he stood as one who dreamed;  
And the red light glanced and gleamed  
On the armor that he wore;  
And he shouted, as the rifted 10  
Streamers o'er him shook and shifted,  
"I accept thy challenge, Thor!"

17. brace it—bind it on. 25. Jove—Jove as the wielder of the lightning. 36. Thor's-Day—Thursday is so derived. 2. red light—that is, the Northern Lights. 6. Drontheim fiord—Drontheim (Trondhjem) was then one of the principal places in Norway; there Olaf was later made king at a general council.



- To avenge his father slain,  
And reconquer realm and reign,  
Came the youthful Olaf home,  
Through the midnight sailing, sailing,  
Listening to the wild wind's wailing,  
And the dashing of the foam.
- To his thoughts the sacred name  
Of his mother Astrid came,  
And the tale she oft had told  
Of her flight by secret passes  
Through the mountains and morasses,  
To the home of Hakon old.
- Then strange memories crowded back  
Of Queen Gunhild's wrath and wrack,  
And a hurried flight by sea;  
Of grim Vikings, and the rapture  
Of the sea-fight, and the capture,  
And the life of slavery.
- How a stranger watched his face  
In the Esthonian market-place,  
Scanned his features one by one,  
Saying, "We should know each other;  
I am Sigurd, Astrid's brother,  
Thou art Olaf, Astrid's son!"
- Then as Queen Allogia's page,  
Old in honors, young in age,  
Chief of all her men-at-arms;  
Till vague whispers, and mysterious,  
Reached King Valdemar, the imperious,  
Filling him with strange alarms.
- Then his cruisings o'er the seas,  
Westward to the Hebrides
- And to Scilly's rocky shore;  
And the hermit's cavern dismal,  
Christ's great name and rites baptismal  
In the ocean's rush and roar.
- All these thoughts of love and strife  
Glimmered through his lurid life,  
As the stars' intenser light  
Through the red flames o'er him trailing,  
As his ships went sailing, sailing  
Northward in the summer night.
- Trained for either camp or court,  
Skilful in each manly sport,  
Young and beautiful and tall;  
Art of warfare, craft of chases,  
Swimming, skating, snow-shoe races,  
Excellent alike in all.
- When at sea, with all his rowers,  
He along the bending oars  
Outside of his ship could run.  
He the Smalsor Horn ascended,  
And his shining shield suspended  
On its summit, like a sun.
- On the ship-rails he could stand,  
Wield his sword with either hand,  
And at once two javelins throw;  
At all feasts where ale was strongest  
Sat the merry monarch longest,  
First to come and last to go.
- Norway never yet had seen  
One so beautiful of mien,  
One so royal in attire,  
When in arms completely furnished,

13. **father slain**—Olaf's father was slain by Eirik Blood-Ax. 24. **Hakon**—Hakon Gamle, a Swede, not to be confused with Hakon Jarl of the following poem. Hakon Gamle protected Astrid and her son during their flight. 26. **Queen Gunhild's**—Queen Gunhild, the wife of Eirik Blood-Ax, according to tradition the Lady Macbeth of Norse history, was the real force behind her sons in their struggle to gain control of Norway. 37. **Queen Allogia's**—wife of Valdemar, the Grand Duke or "king" of Russia (Novgorod). 46. **hermit's**—See Chap. xxxii of "King Olaf Trygvesson's Saga." 49. **thoughts of love**—After the death of Queen Geyre, Olaf married Gyda, the daughter (the saga says sister) of Olaf Kvaran, who was King of Dublin, but with twelve men he was compelled to fight with another suitor named Alfin and his twelve men to get her. 64-66. **Smalsor Horn**—"... he ascended the Smalsor Horn [an inaccessible peak on the summit of a mountain in Bremanger, now called Hornelen], and fixed his shield upon the very peak."—Chap. xcii of "King Olaf Trygvesson's Saga." 67-72. "King Olaf could run across the oars outside of the vessel while his men were rowing the Serpent. He could play with three daggers, so that one was always in the air, and he took the one falling by the handle. He could walk all around the ship's rails, could strike and cut equally well with both hands, and could cast two spears at once. King Olaf was a very merry frolicsome man; gay and social; had great taste in everything; was very generous; was very finical in his dress, but in battle he exceeded all in bravery."—*Ibid.*

Harness gold-inlaid and burnished,  
Mantle like a flame of fire.

Thus came Olaf to his own,  
When upon the night-wind blown 80  
Passed that cry along the shore;  
And he answered, while the rifted  
Streamers o'er him shook and shifted,  
"I accept thy challenge, Thor!"

## III

## THORA OF RIMOL

By force and fraud Earl Hakon of Lade obtained power in Norway, afterwards forming an alliance with Thora of Rimol, "a woman of great influence, and one of the earl's best beloved." He was surprised by Olaf Trygvesson and forced to flee, as told in the poem, which, with wonderful vividness, relates the events of sections LIII-LVI of "King Olaf Trygvesson's Saga." As illustrating Longfellow's remarkable skill in following the terse account of the saga, the pertinent passages are quoted:

"The earl now sends Kark to Thora, and begs of her to come secretly to him. She did so, and he took it very kind of her, and begged her to conceal him for a few nights until the army of the bonders [yeomen] had dispersed. 'Here about my house,' said she, 'you will be hunted after, both inside and outside; for many know that I would willingly help you if I can. There is but one place about the house where they could never expect to find such a man as you, and that is the swine-stye.' When they came there the earl said, 'Well, let it be made ready for us; as to save our life is the first and foremost concern.' The slave dug a great hole in it, bore away the earth that he dug out, and laid wood over it. . . . Then the earl and Kark both went in the hole. Thora covered it with wood, and threw earth and dung over it, and drove the swine upon the top of it.

" . . . Then Olaf held a House Thing or council out in the yard, and stood upon a great stone which lay beside the swine-stye, and made a speech to the people, in which

he promised to enrich the man with rewards and honours who should kill the earl. This speech was heard by the earl and the thrall Kark.

" 'Why art thou so pale,' says the earl, 'and now again black as earth? Thou hast not the intention to betray me?'

" 'By no means,' replies Kark.

" 'We were born on the same night,' says the earl, 'and the time will be short between our deaths.'

" . . . When night came the earl kept himself awake; but Kark slept, and was disturbed in his sleep. The earl woke him, and asked him, 'what he was dreaming of?'

"He answered, 'I was at Lade, and Olaf Trygvesson was laying a gold ring about my neck.'

"The earl says, 'It will be a red ring Olaf will lay about thy neck if he catches thee. . . .'

" . . . towards day the earl suddenly dropped asleep; but his sleep was so unquiet that he drew his heels under him, and raised his neck, as if going to rise, and screamed dreadfully high. On this Kark, dreadfully alarmed, drew a large knife out of his belt, stuck it in the earl's throat, and cut it across, and killed Earl Hakon. Then Kark cut off the earl's head, and ran away. Late in the day he came to Lade, where he delivered the earl's head to King Olaf . . . Olaf had him taken out and beheaded. . . . [At Nidarholm] he had the heads of the earl and of Kark hung upon [a gallows], and the whole army of the bonders cast stones at them, screaming and shouting that the one worthless fellow had followed the other."

"Thora of Rimol! hide me! hide me!  
Danger and shame and death betide me!  
For Olaf the King is hunting me down  
Through field and forest, through thorp and town!"

Thus cried Jarl Hakon 5  
To Thora, the fairest of women.

"Hakon Jarl! for the love I bear thee  
Neither shall shame nor death come near  
thee!

But the hiding-place wherein thou must lie  
Is the cave underneath the swine in the sty."

Thus to Jarl Hakon 11  
Said Thora, the fairest of women.

So Hakon Jarl and his base thrall Karker  
Crouched in the cave, than a dungeon darker,  
As Olaf came riding, with men in mail, 15  
Through the forest roads into Orkadale,  
Demanding Jarl Hakon  
Of Thora, the fairest of women.

"Rich and honored shall be whoever  
The head of Hakon Jarl shall disserve!" 20  
Hakon heard him, and Karker the slave,  
Through the breathing-holes of the darksome  
cave.

Alone in her chamber  
Wept Thora, the fairest of women.

Said Karker, the crafty, "I will not slay  
thee!  
For all the king's gold I will never betray  
thee!" 26

"Then why dost thou turn so pale, O churl,  
And then again black as the earth?" said the  
Earl.

More pale and more faithful  
Was Thora, the fairest of women. 30

From a dream in the night the thrall started,  
saying,  
"Round my neck a gold ring King Olaf was  
laying!"

And Hakon answered, "Beware of the king!  
He will lay round thy neck a blood-red ring."

At the ring on her finger 35  
Gazed Thora, the fairest of women.

At daybreak slept Hakon, with sorrows en-  
cumbered,

But screamed and drew up his feet as he  
slumbered;

The thrall in the darkness plunged with his  
knife,

And the Earl awakened no more in this  
life. 40

But wakeful and weeping  
Sat Thora, the fairest of women.

At Nidarholm the priests are all singing,  
Two ghastly heads on the gibbet are swing-  
ing;

One is Jarl Hakon's and one is his thrall's,  
And the people are shouting from windows  
and walls;

While alone in her chamber  
Swoons Thora, the fairest of women.

## IV

## QUEEN SIGRID THE HAUGHTY

After subduing Norway, Olaf proposed  
marriage to Queen Sigrid in Sweden, who  
refused him as related in the poem, and later  
married Svend of the Forked Beard, King  
of Denmark and conqueror of England. See  
section xvii of the poem.

Queen Sigrid the Haughty sat proud and  
aloft

In her chamber, that looked over meadow  
and croft.

Heart's dearest,  
Why dost thou sorrow so?

The floor with tassels of fir was besprent, 5  
Filling the room with their fragrant scent.

She heard the birds sing, she saw the sun  
shine,

The air of summer was sweeter than wine.

Like a sword without scabbard the bright  
river lay 9

Between her own kingdom and Norrway.

But Olaf the King had sued for her hand,  
The sword would be sheathed, the river be  
spanned.

Her maidens were seated around her knee,  
Working bright figures in tapestry.

And one was singing the ancient rune 15  
Of Brynhilda's love and the wrath of Gudrun.

And through it, and round it, and over it all  
Sounded incessant the waterfall.

15-16. **rune**—presumably portions of the *Volsungasaga*, the Scandinavian version of the story  
of the *Nibelungenlied*.

The Queen in her hand held a ring of gold,  
From the door of Ladé's Temple old. 20

King Olaf had sent her this wedding gift,  
But her thoughts as arrows were keen and  
swift.

She had given the ring to her goldsmiths  
twain,  
Who smiled, as they handed it back again.

And Sigrid the Queen, in her haughty way,  
Said, "Why do you smile, my goldsmiths,  
say?" 26

And they answered: "O Queen! if the truth  
must be told,  
The ring is of copper, and not of gold!"

The lightning flashed o'er her forehead and  
cheek,  
She only murmured, she did not speak: 30

"If in his gifts he can faithless be,  
There will be no gold in his love to me."

A footstep was heard on the outer stair,  
And in strode King Olaf with royal air.

He kissed the Queen's hand, and he whis-  
pered of love, 35  
And swore to be true as the stars are above.

But she smiled with contempt as she an-  
swered: "O King,  
Will you swear it, as Odin once swore, on  
the ring?"

And the King: "Oh speak not of Odin to me,  
The wife of King Olaf a Christian must be."

Looking straight at the King, with her level  
brows, 41  
She said, "I keep true to my faith and my  
vows."

Then the face of King Olaf was darkened  
with gloom,  
He rose in his anger and strode through the  
room.

"Why, then, should I care to have thee?" he  
said,—

"A faded old woman, a heathenish jade!" 45

His zeal was stronger than fear or love,  
And he struck the Queen in the face with his  
glove.

Then forth from the chamber in anger he  
fled,  
And the wooden stairway shook with his  
tread. 50

Queen Sigrid the Haughty said under her  
breath,  
"This insult, King Olaf, shall be thy death!"  
Heart's dearest,  
Why dost thou sorrow so?

Sections v, vi, and vii of the poem relate  
various supernatural happenings, in which  
the Norse gods struggle with Olaf; and Olaf's  
destruction of the image of Odin at Mere.

## VIII

## GUDRUN

Olaf defeated Jern Skiaegge, the leader of  
the yeomen who opposed him in the name  
of the old religion. Olaf's men killed Jern  
Skiaegge, and the king therefore offered to  
marry Gudrun, Jern's daughter, by way of  
compensation. At the conclusion of the in-  
cident described by Longfellow the saga says  
simply: "Gudrun never came into the king's  
bed again."

On King Olaf's bridal night  
Shines the moon with tender light,  
And across the chamber streams  
Its tide of dreams.

At the fatal midnight hour, 5  
When all evil things have power,  
In the glimmer of the moon  
Stands Gudrun.

Close against her heaving breast  
Something in her hand is pressed; 10

20. Ladé's Temple—The saga says that Olaf razed the heathen temple at Lade to the ground,  
and took the great gold ring which Earl Hakon had had made and which hung on the door of  
the temple. This "was considered a distinguished ornament."

Like an icicle, its sheen  
Is cold and keen.

On the cairn are fixed her eyes  
Where her murdered father lies,  
And a voice remote and drear  
She seems to hear.

What a bridal night is this!  
Cold will be the dagger's kiss;  
Laden with the chill of death  
Is its breath.

Like the drifting snow she sweeps  
To the couch where Olaf sleeps;  
Suddenly he wakes and stirs,  
His eyes meet hers.

"What is that," King Olaf said,  
"Gleams so bright above my head?  
Wherefore standest thou so white  
In pale moonlight?"

"'Tis the bodkin that I wear  
When at night I bind my hair;  
It woke me falling on the floor;  
'Tis nothing more."

"Forests have ears, and fields have eyes—  
Often treachery lurking lies  
Underneath the fairest hair!  
Gudrun beware!"

Ere the earliest peep of morn  
Blew King Olaf's bugle-horn;  
And forever sundered ride  
Bridegroom and bride!

The omitted sections (ix-xvi) tell of the Christianization of Norway; the building and manning of Olaf's great war vessel, the *Long Serpent*; the reception at Olaf's court of Thyri, the sister of Svend of the Forked Beard, who fled from her husband, King Burislaf; the wedding of Olaf and Thyri; and how Thyri incited him to conquer Vendland, the kingdom of King Burislaf.

4. *Vendland*—the south shore of the Baltic. 5. *courses hauled*—with sails trimmed to sail with the wind. 7. *Svald*—So says the saga, but Svald is a harbor west of the island of Rügen. 9. *Gunhild's*—This is Gunhild, daughter of King Burislaf, not the Gunhild of sec. II, line 26.

## XVII

## KING SVEND OF THE FORKED BEARD

Svend, King of Denmark, hoped to recover possession of lands in Norway, and formed an alliance with the "King" of Sweden, and with Eirik and Svein, the sons of Jarl Hakon, to attack Olaf.

Loudly the sailors cheered  
Svend of the Forked Beard,  
As with his fleet he steered  
Southward to Vendland;  
Where with their courses hauled  
All were together called,  
Under the Isle of Svald  
Near to the mainland.

After Queen Gunhild's death,  
So the old Saga saith,  
Plighted King Svend his faith  
To Sigrid the Haughty;  
And to avenge his bride,  
Soothing her wounded pride,  
Over the waters wide  
King Olaf sought he.

Still on her scornful face,  
Blushing with deep disgrace,  
Bore she the crimson trace  
Of Olaf's gauntlet;  
Like a malignant star,  
Blazing in heaven afar,  
Red shone the angry scar  
Under her frontlet.

Oft to King Svend she spake,  
"For thine own honor's sake  
Shalt thou swift vengeance take  
On the vile coward!"  
Until the King at last,  
Gusty and overcast,  
Like a tempestuous blast  
Threatened and lowered.

Soon as the Spring appeared,  
Svend of the Forked Beard

High his red standard reared, 35  
 Eager for battle;  
 While every warlike Dane,  
 Seizing his arms again,  
 Left all unsown the grain,  
 Unhoused the cattle. 40

Likewise the Swedish King  
 Summoned in haste a Thing,  
 Weapons and men to bring  
 In aid of Denmark;  
 Eric the Norseman, too, 45  
 As the war-tidings flew,  
 Sailed with a chosen crew  
 From Lapland and Finmark.

So upon Easter day  
 Sailed the three kings away, 50  
 Out of the sheltered bay,  
 In the bright season;  
 With them Earl Sigvald came,  
 Eager for spoil and fame;  
 Pity that such a name 55  
 Stooped to such treason!

Safe under Svald at last,  
 Now were their anchors cast,  
 Safe from the sea and blast,  
 Plotted the three kings; 60  
 While, with a base intent,  
 Southward Earl Sigvald went,  
 On a foul errand bent,  
 Unto the Sea-Kings.

Thence to hold on his course 65  
 Unto King Olaf's force,  
 Lying within the hoarse  
 Mouths of Stet-haven;  
 Him to ensnare and bring  
 Unto the Danish king, 70  
 Who his dead corse would fling  
 Forth to the raven!

## XVIII

## KING OLAF AND EARL SIGVALD

Olaf had sixty ships of war; when rumors of the armament of the allies reached his ears, the treacherous Sigvald persuaded him that Svend would not attack so powerful a fleet, but said he would bring eleven powerful ships to Olaf's aid. Olaf therefore ordered his fleet to sail for home, but the smaller ships sailed fastest, leaving only eleven ships with Olaf. Sigvald then persuaded Olaf that he knew the best channels for the large ships, and so betrayed the King to his enemies, he himself taking no part in the battle.

On the gray sea-sands  
 King Olaf stands,  
 Northward and seaward  
 He points with his hands.  
 With eddy and whirl 5  
 The sea-tides curl,  
 Washing the sandals  
 Of Sigvald the Earl.

The mariners shout,  
 The ships swing about, 10  
 The yards are all hoisted,  
 The sails flutter out.

The war-horns are played,  
 The anchors are weighed,  
 Like moths in the distance 15  
 The sails flit and fade.

The sea is like lead,  
 The harbor lies dead,  
 As a corse on the sea-shore,  
 Whose spirit has fled! 20

On that fatal day,  
 The histories say,

41. **Swedish King**—whose name was also Olaf, wherefore Longfellow has to omit naming him. He was the son of Sigrid the Haughty. 42. **Thing**—Council. 45. **Eric**—son of Jarl Hakon. 48. **Finmark**—the northern part of the Scandinavian peninsula. 53. **Earl Sigvald**—Earl Sigvald had been instrumental in forming the marriage between King Burislaaf of Vendland and Thyri, who was now the wife of Olaf. A great and famous warrior, he counterfeited his designs and pretended to be the friend of Olaf, as related in sec. xviii of the poem. This is the "foul errand" of line 63: "to bring it about by cunning devices that King Svend and King Olaf should fall in with each other." 68. **Stet-haven**—Olaf had sailed to Vendland (North Germany), and must sail north to get home again.

Seventy vessels  
Sailed out of the bay.

But soon scattered wide  
O'er the billows they ride,  
While Sigvald and Olaf  
Sail side by side.

Cried the Earl: "Follow me!  
I your pilot will be,  
For I know all the channels  
Where flows the deep sea!"

So into the strait  
Where his foes lie in wait,  
Gallant King Olaf  
Sails to his fate!

Then the sea-fog veils  
The ships and their sails;  
Queen Sigrid the Haughty,  
Thy vengeance prevails!

#### XIX

#### KING OLAF'S WAR-HORNS

Based on Chapters CXII-CXVII of the saga.

"Strike the sails!" King Olaf said;  
"Never shall men of mine take flight;  
Never away from battle I fled,  
Never away from my foes!

Let God dispose  
Of my life in the fight!"

"Sound the horns!" said Olaf the King;  
And suddenly through the drifting brume  
The blare of the horns began to ring,  
Like the terrible trumpet shock  
Of Regnarock,  
On the Day of Doom!

Louder and louder the war-horns sang  
Over the level floor of the flood;  
All the sails came down with a clang,

And there in the midst overhead  
The sun hung red  
As a drop of blood.

25 Drifting down on the Danish fleet  
Three together the ships were lashed,  
So that neither should turn and retreat;  
In the midst, but in front of the rest,

30 The burnished crest  
Of the Serpent flashed.

King Olaf stood on the quarter-deck,  
With bow of ash and arrows of oak;  
His gilded shield was without a fleck,  
His helmet inlaid with gold,  
35 And in many a fold  
Hung his crimson cloak. 30

On the forecastle Ulf the Red  
Watched the lashing of the ships;  
"If the Serpent lie so far ahead,  
40 We shall have hard work of it here,"  
Said he with a sneer 35  
On his bearded lips.

King Olaf laid an arrow on string,  
"Have I a coward on board?" said he.  
"Shoot it another way, O King!"  
Sullenly answered Ulf, 40  
The old sea-wolf;  
"You have need of me!"

5 In front came Svend, the King of the Danes,  
Sweeping down with his fifty rowers;  
To the right, the Swedish king with his  
thanes; 45  
And on board of the Iron Beard  
Earl Eric steered  
To the left with his oars.

"These soft Danes and Swedes," said the  
King, 49  
"At home with their wives had better stay,  
Than come within reach of my Serpent's  
sting:

33. **strait**—by Svald, as narrated in the previous poem. 1. Olaf's people begged him not to risk battle with so great a force, but he answered as indicated. In battle, Viking ships resorted to oars instead of sails. 8. **brume**—mist. 11. **Regnarock**—in Norse mythology, the day of the destruction of the world. 16. **midst**—mist, in earlier version. 20. **three together**—Ships were bound three together, the longest in the middle, and rowed against each other. The fighting was mainly done from the forecastles, and grappling irons were used for dragging the vessels out of line or for bringing them within boarding distance.

But where Eric the Norseman leads  
 Heroic deeds  
 Will be done to-day!"

Then as together the vessels crashed, 55  
 Eric severed the cables of hide,  
 With which King Olaf's ships were lashed,  
 And left them to drive and drift  
 With the currents swift  
 Of the outward tide. 60

Louder the war-horns growl and snarl,  
 Sharper the dragons bite and sting!  
 Eric the son of Hakon Jarl  
 A death-drink salt as the sea  
 Pledges to thee, 65  
 Olaf the King!

## XX

## EINAR TAMBERSKELVER

Based on Chapter cxviii of the saga.

It was Einar Tamberskelver  
 Stood beside the mast;  
 From his yew-bow, tipped with silver,  
 Flew the arrows fast;  
 Aimed at Eric unavailing,  
 As he sat concealed,  
 Half behind the quarter-railing,  
 Half behind his shield.

First an arrow struck the tiller,  
 Just above his head; 10  
 "Sing, O Eyvind Skaldaspiller,"  
 Then Earl Eric said.  
 "Sing the song of Hakon dying,  
 Sing his funeral wail!"  
 And another arrow flying 15  
 Grazed his coat of mail.

Turning to a Lapland yeoman,  
 As the arrow passed,

Said Earl Eric, "Shoot that bowman  
 Standing by the mast." 20  
 Sooner than the word was spoken  
 Flew the yeoman's shaft;  
 Einar's bow in twain was broken,  
 Einar only laughed.

"What was that?" said Olaf, standing 25  
 On the quarter-deck.  
 "Something heard I like the stranding  
 Of a shattered wreck."  
 Einar then, the arrow taking  
 From the loosened string, 30  
 Answered, "That was Norway breaking  
 From thy hand, O King!"

"Thou art but a poor diviner,"  
 Straightway Olaf said;  
 "Take my bow, and swifter, Einar, 35  
 Let thy shafts be sped."  
 Of his bows the fairest choosing,  
 Reached he from above;  
 Einar saw the blood-drops oozing  
 Through his iron glove. 40

But the bow was thin and narrow;  
 At the first essay,  
 O'er its head he drew the arrow,  
 Flung the bow away;  
 Said, with hot and angry temper 45  
 Flushing in his cheek,  
 "Olaf! for so great a Kämper  
 Are thy bows too weak!"

Then, with smile of joy defiant  
 On his beardless lip, 50  
 Scaled he, light and self-reliant,  
 Eric's dragon-ship.  
 Loose his golden locks were flowing,  
 Bright his armor gleamed;  
 Like Saint Michael overthrowing 55  
 Lucifer he seemed.

62. **dragons**—Prows of Viking ships were shaped into dragon's heads, and heavily reinforced so that they served as rams. 1. **Einar Tamberskelver**—Einar "was not reckoned as fully experienced, being only eighteen years old" when he first joined the crew of the *Long Serpent*, but he became the most famous bowman in the fleet. 11. **Eyvind Skaldaspiller**—a great poet or scald, who had composed verses celebrating the prowess of Jarl Hakon, and was now in the service of Eric, Hakon's son. 47. **Kämper**—warrior.



## XXI

## KING OLAF'S DEATH-DRINK

Based on Chapters cxx-cxxii of the saga.

All day has the battle raged,  
 All day have the ships engaged,  
 But not yet is assuaged  
 The vengeance of Eric the Earl.

The decks with blood are red,  
 The arrows of death are sped,  
 The ships are filled with the dead,  
 And the spears the champions hurl.

They drift as wrecks on the tide,  
 The grappling-irons are plied,  
 The boarders climb up the side,  
 The shouts are feeble and few.

Ah! never shall Norway again  
 See her sailors come back o'er the main;  
 They all lie wounded or slain,  
 Or asleep in the billows blue!

On the deck stands Olaf the King,  
 Around him whistle and sing  
 The spears that the foemen fling,  
 And the stones they hurl with their hands.

In the midst of the stones and the spears,  
 Kolbiorn, the marshal, appears,  
 His shield in the air he uprears,  
 By the side of King Olaf he stands.

Over the slippery wreck  
 Of the Long Serpent's deck  
 Sweeps Eric with hardly a check,  
 His lips with anger are pale;

He hews with his axe at the mast,  
 Till it falls, with the sails overcast  
 Like a snow-covered pine in the vast  
 Dim forests of Orkadale.

Seeing King Olaf then,  
 He rushes aft with his men,  
 As a hunter into the den  
 Of the bear, when he stands at bay. 35

"Remember Jarl Hakon!" he cries;  
 When lo! on his wondering eyes,  
 Two kingly figures arise,  
 Two Olafs in warlike array! 40

5 Then Kolbiorn speaks in the ear  
 Of King Olaf a word of cheer,  
 In a whisper that none may hear,  
 With a smile on his tremulous lip;

Two shields raised high in the air, 45  
 Two flashes of golden hair,  
 Two scarlet meteors' glare,  
 And both have leaped from the ship.

Earl Eric's men in the boats  
 Seize Kolbiorn's shield as it floats, 50  
 And cry, from their hairy throats,  
 "See! it is Olaf the King!"

While far on the opposite side  
 Floats another shield on the tide,  
 Like a jewel set in the wide 55  
 Sea-current's eddying ring.

There is told a wonderful tale,  
 How the King stripped off his mail,  
 Like leaves of the brown sea-kale,  
 As he swam beneath the main; 60

25 But the young grew old and gray,  
 And never, by night or day,  
 In his kingdom of Norrøway  
 Was King Olaf seen again!

30 Section xxii of the poem concludes the  
 whole with a picture of Astrid, the mother  
 of Olaf, as an abbess, listening to a message  
 from St. John that love is eternal.

32. Orkadale—Cf. line 15 of sec. iii ("Thora of Rimol") for the appropriateness of this reference. 39. Two kingly figures—that is, Kolbiorn was dressed like the King. 50. Kolbiorn—that is, Kolbiorn was rescued. 59. sea-kale—a plant found wild on the shores of western Europe.

## THE BIRDS OF KILLINGWORTH

Published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, December, 1863, and afterwards included in *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (1863). According to the collected *Works*, "the men of the northern part of the town [of Killingworth, Connecticut] did yearly in the spring choose two leaders, and then the two sides were formed: the side that got beaten should pay the bills. Their special game was the hawk, the owl, the crow, the black-bird, and any other bird supposed to be mischievous to the corn. Some years each side would bring them in by the bushel. This was followed up for only a few years, for the birds began to grow scarce." The story, based upon this suggestion, is Longfellow's invention.

It was the season, when through all the land  
 The merle and mavis build, and building sing  
 Those lovely lyrics, written by His hand,  
 Whom Saxon Caedmon calls the Blithe-heart King;  
 When on the boughs the purple buds expand, 5  
 The banners of the vanguard of the Spring,  
 And rivulets, rejoicing, rush and leap,  
 And wave their fluttering signals from the steep.

The robin and the bluebird, piping loud,  
 Filled all the blossoming orchards with their glee; 10  
 The sparrows chirped as if they still were proud  
 Their race in Holy Writ should mentioned be;  
 And hungry crows, assembled in a crowd,  
 Clamored their piteous prayer incessantly,  
 Knowing who hears the ravens cry, and said: 15  
 "Give us, O Lord, this day, our daily bread!"

Across the Sound the birds of passage sailed,  
 Speaking some unknown language strange and sweet  
 Of tropic isle remote, and passing hailed  
 The village with the cheers of all their fleet; 20  
 Or quarrelling together, laughed and railed  
 Like foreign sailors, landed in the street  
 Of seaport town, and with outlandish noise  
 Of oaths and gibberish frightening girls and boys.

Thus came the jocund Spring in Killingworth, 25  
 In fabulous days, some hundred years ago;  
 And thrifty farmers, as they tilled the earth,  
 Heard with alarm the cawing of the crow,  
 That mingled with the universal mirth,  
 Cassandra-like, prognosticating woe; 30

2. merle and mavis—the European blackbird and the thrush. 4. Caedmon—Caedmon was an Anglo-Saxon poet of the seventh century. The reference is to a phrase in the poem *Genesis*. 11. sparrows—Cf. Matt. 10: 29. 15. ravens—Cf. Ps. 147: 9. 16. Give—Cf. Matt. 6: 11. 17. Sound—Long Island Sound. 30. Cassandra—the daughter of Priam and Hecuba, who was given the gift of prophecy by Apollo, but, because she broke her promise to the god, was punished by having her prophecies regarded as futile.

They shook their heads, and doomed with dreadful words  
To swift destruction the whole race of birds.

And a town-meeting was convened straightway  
To set a price upon the guilty heads  
Of these marauders, who, in lieu of pay, 35  
Levied black-mail upon the garden beds  
And cornfields, and beheld without dismay  
The awful scarecrow, with his fluttering shreds;  
The skeleton that waited at their feast,  
Whereby their sinful pleasure was increased. 40

Then from his house, a temple painted white,  
With fluted columns, and a roof of red,  
The Squire came forth, august and splendid sight!  
Slowly descending, with majestic tread,  
Three flights of steps, nor looking left nor right, 45  
Down the long street he walked, as one who said,  
"A town that boasts inhabitants like me  
Can have no lack of good society!"

The Parson, too, appeared, a man austere,  
The instinct of whose nature was to kill; 50  
The wrath of God he preached from year to year,  
And read, with fervor, Edwards on the Will;  
His favorite pastime was to slay the deer  
In Summer on some Adirondac hill;  
E'en now, while walking down the rural lane, 55  
He lopped the wayside lilies with his cane.

From the Academy, whose belfry crowned  
The hill of Science with its vane of brass,  
Came the Preceptor, gazing idly round,  
Now at the clouds, and now at the green grass, 60  
And all absorbed in reveries profound  
Of fair Almira in the upper class,  
Who was, as in a sonnet he had said,  
As pure as water, and as good as bread.

And next the Deacon issued from his door, 65  
In his voluminous neck-cloth, white as snow;  
A suit of sable bombazine he wore;  
His form was ponderous, and his step was slow;  
There never was so wise a man before;  
He seemed the incarnate "Well, I told you so!" 70  
And to perpetuate his great renown  
There was a street named after him in town.

51. **wrath of God**—supposed to be the central doctrine of Calvinism. 52. **Edwards on the Will**—The masterpiece of Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) is his treatise on the freedom of the will, published in 1754. Cf. p. 55. 57. **Academy**—Before the rise of the high school, the village academy was the characteristic American secondary school. 58. **Science**—knowledge. 67. **bombazine**—twilled fabric.

These came together in the new town-hall,  
 With sundry farmers from the region round.  
 The Squire presided, dignified and tall, 75  
 His air impressive and his reasoning sound;  
 Ill fared it with the birds, both great and small;  
 Hardly a friend in all that crowd they found,  
 But enemies enough, who every one  
 Charged them with all the crimes beneath the sun. 80

When they had ended, from his place apart  
 Rose the Preceptor, to redress the wrong,  
 And, trembling like a steed before the start,  
 Looked round bewildered on the expectant throng;  
 Then thought of fair Almira, and took heart 85  
 To speak out what was in him, clear and strong,  
 Alike regardless of their smile or frown,  
 And quite determined not to be laughed down.

"Plato, anticipating the Reviewers,  
 From his Republic banished without pity 90  
 The Poets; in this little town of yours,  
 You put to death, by means of a Committee,  
 The ballad-singers and the Troubadours,  
 The street-musicians of the heavenly city,  
 The birds, who make sweet music for us all 95  
 In our dark hours, as David did for Saul.

"The thrush that carols at the dawn of day  
 From the green steeples of the piny wood;  
 The oriole in the elm; the noisy jay,  
 Jargoning like a foreigner at his food; 100  
 The bluebird balanced on some topmost spray,  
 Flooding with melody the neighborhood;  
 Linnet and meadow-lark, and all the throng  
 That dwell in nests, and have the gift of song.

"You slay them all! and wherefore? for the gain 105  
 Of a scant handful more or less of wheat,  
 Or rye, or barley, or some other grain,  
 Scratched up at random by industrious feet,  
 Searching for worm or weevil after rain!  
 Or a few cherries, that are not so sweet 110  
 As are the songs these uninvited guests  
 Sing at their feast with comfortable breasts.

"Do you ne'er think what wondrous beings these?  
 Do you ne'er think who made them, and who taught  
 The dialect they speak, where melodies 115  
 Alone are the interpreters of thought?

89. Plato . . . the Reviewers—In his ideal commonwealth, pictured in the *Republic*, Plato allowed no poets. The harshness of critical reviews of poetry in quarterlies like the *Edinburgh Review* is what Longfellow has in mind. 96. David—Cf. I Sam. 16: 14-23.

Whose household words are songs in many keys,  
 Sweeter than instrument of men e'er caught!  
 Whose habitations in the tree-tops even  
 Are half-way houses on the road to heaven! 120

"Think, every morning when the sun peeps through  
 The dim, leaf-latticed windows of the grove,  
 How jubilant the happy birds renew  
 Their old, melodious madrigals of love!  
 And when you think of this, remember too 125  
 'Tis always morning somewhere, and above  
 The awakening continents, from shore to shore,  
 Somewhere the birds are singing evermore.

"Think of your woods and orchards without birds!  
 Of empty nests that cling to boughs and beams 130  
 As in an idiot's brain remembered words  
 Hang empty 'mid the cobwebs of his dreams!  
 Will bleat of flocks or bellowing of herds  
 Make up for the lost music, when your teams  
 Drag home the stingy harvest, and no more 135  
 The feathered gleaners follow to your door?"

"What! would you rather see the incessant stir  
 Of insects in the windrows of the hay,  
 And hear the locust and the grasshopper  
 Their melancholy hurdy-gurdies play? 140  
 Is this more pleasant to you than the whirl  
 Of meadow-lark, and her sweet roundelay,  
 Or twitter of little field-fares, as you take  
 Your nooning in the shade of bush and brake?"

"You call them thieves and pillagers; but know, 145  
 They are the winged wardens of your farms,  
 Who from the cornfields drive the insidious foe,  
 And from your harvests keep a hundred harms;  
 Even the blackest of them all, the crow,  
 Renders good service as your man-at-arms, 150  
 Crushing the beetle in his coat of mail,  
 And crying havoc on the slug and snail.

"How can I teach your children gentleness,  
 And mercy to the weak, and reverence  
 For Life, which, in its weakness or excess, 155  
 Is still a gleam of God's omnipotence,  
 Or Death, which, seeming darkness, is no less  
 The selfsame light, although averted hence,  
 When by your laws, your actions, and your speech,  
 You contradict the very things I teach?" 160

124. *madrigals*—unaccompanied choruses in four or eight parts, generally love songs. 142. *roundelay*—a song in which a simple melody is often repeated. 143. *field-fares*—European thrush.

With this he closed; and through the audience went  
 A murmur, like the rustle of dead leaves;  
 The farmers laughed and nodded, and some bent  
 Their yellow heads together like their sheaves;  
 Men have no faith in fine-spun sentiment 165  
 Who put their trust in bullocks and in bees.  
 The birds were doomed; and, as the record shows,  
 A bounty offered for the heads of crows.

There was another audience out of reach,  
 Who had no voice nor vote in making laws, 170  
 But in the papers read his little speech,  
 And crowned his modest temples with applause;  
 They made him conscious, each one more than each,  
 He still was victor, vanquished in their cause.  
 Sweetest of all the applause he won from thee, 175  
 O fair Almira at the Academy!

And so the dreadful massacre began;  
 O'er fields and orchards, and o'er woodland crests,  
 The ceaseless fusillade of terror ran.  
 Dead fell the birds, with blood-stains on their breasts, 180  
 Or wounded crept away from sight of man,  
 While the young died of famine in their nests;  
 A slaughter to be told in groans, not words,  
 The very St. Bartholomew of Birds!

The Summer came, and all the birds were dead; 185  
 The days were like hot coals; the very ground  
 Was burned to ashes; in the orchards fed  
 Myriads of caterpillars, and around  
 The cultivated fields and garden beds  
 Hosts of devouring insects crawled, and found 190  
 No foe to check their march, till they had made  
 The land a desert without leaf or shade.

Devoured by worms, like Herod, was the town,  
 Because, like Herod, it had ruthlessly  
 Slaughtered the Innocents. From the trees spun down 195  
 The canker-worms upon the passers-by,  
 Upon each woman's bonnet, shawl, and gown,  
 Who shook them off with just a little cry;  
 They were the terror of each favorite walk,  
 The endless theme of all the village talk. 200

The farmers grew impatient, but a few  
 Confessed their error, and would not complain,  
 For after all, the best thing one can do  
 When it is raining, is to let it rain.

184. St. Bartholomew—On the evening of Aug. 23, 1572 (St. Bartholomew's Eve), the French Huguenots were massacred by order of the King. 192. land—Cf. Acts 12: 23. 193. Herod—Cf. Matt. 2: 16.

Then they repealed the law, although they knew 20<sub>5</sub>  
 It would not call the dead to life again;  
 As school-boys, finding their mistake too late,  
 Draw a wet sponge across the accusing slate.

That year in Killingworth the Autumn came  
 Without the light of his majestic look, 21<sub>0</sub>  
 The wonder of the falling tongues of flame,  
 The illumined pages of his Doom's-Day book.  
 A few lost leaves blushed crimson with their shame,  
 And drowned themselves despairing in the brook,  
 While the wild wind went moaning everywhere, 21<sub>5</sub>  
 Lamenting the dead children of the air!

But the next Spring a stranger sight was seen,  
 A sight that never yet by bard was sung,  
 As great a wonder as it would have been  
 If some dumb animal had found a tongue! 22<sub>0</sub>  
 A wagon, overarched with evergreen,  
 Upon whose boughs were wicker cages hung,  
 All full of singing birds, came down the street,  
 Filling the air with music wild and sweet.

From all the country round these birds were brought, 22<sub>5</sub>  
 By order of the town, with anxious quest,  
 And, loosened from their wicker prisons, sought  
 In woods and fields the places they loved best,  
 Singing loud canticles, which many thought  
 Were satires to the authorities addressed, 23<sub>0</sub>  
 While others, listening in green lanes, averred  
 Such lovely music never had been heard!

But blither still and louder carolled they  
 Upon the morrow, for they seemed to know  
 It was the fair Almira's wedding-day, 23<sub>5</sub>  
 And everywhere, around, above, below,  
 When the Preceptor bore his bride away,  
 Their songs burst forth in joyous overflow,  
 And a new heaven bent over a new earth  
 Amid the sunny farms of Killingworth. 24<sub>0</sub>

## DIVINA COMMEDIA

Published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, December, 1864-November, 1866. The first two sonnets prefaced the *Inferno*, but the whole six appeared in *Flower-de-Luce* (1866), and were also distributed as prefaces to three portions of the *Divine Comedy* when

211. *tongues*—Cf. Acts 2:3. 212. *Doom's-Day book*—William the Conqueror took an "inventory" of England, known as the Domesday Book, so called because its thoroughness was said to be like that of the Last Judgment. 229. *canticles*—chants, as for a church service.

the translation was completed. The autobiographical references are to the poet's grief over the death of his second wife.

Oft have I seen at some cathedral door  
 A laborer, pausing in the dust and heat,  
 Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet  
 Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor  
 Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er; 5  
 Far off the noises of the world retreat;  
 The loud vociferations of the street  
 Become an undistinguishable roar.  
 So, as I enter here from day to day,  
 And leave my burden at this minster gate, 10  
 Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,  
 The tumult of the time disconsolate  
 To inarticulate murmurs dies away,  
 While the eternal ages watch and wait.

## II

How strange the sculptures that adorn these towers! 15  
 This crowd of statues, in whose folded sleeves  
 Birds build their nests; while canopied with leaves  
 Parvis and portal bloom like trellised bowers,  
 And the vast minster seems a cross of flowers!  
 But fiends and dragons on the gargoyle eaves 20  
 Watch the dead Christ between the living thieves,  
 And, underneath, the traitor Judas lowers!  
 Ah! from what agonies of heart and brain,  
 What exultations trampling on despair,  
 What tenderness, what tears, what hate of wrong, 25  
 What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,  
 Uprose this poem of the earth and air,  
 This mediaeval miracle of song!

## III

I enter, and I see thee in the gloom  
 Of the long aisles, O poet saturnine! 30  
 And strive to make my steps keep pace with thine.  
 The air is filled with some unknown perfume;  
 The congregation of the dead make room  
 For thee to pass; the votive tapers shine;  
 Like rooks that haunt Ravenna's groves of pine 35  
 The hovering echoes fly from tomb to tomb.

10. *minster gate*—cathedral gate or door. 12. *time disconsolate*—the Civil War. 18. *parvis*—about equivalent to church porch. 20. *fiends*—The general comparison is between the woes pictured in the *Inferno* and the sculptures, especially the gargoyles, of a cathedral. 30. *poet saturnine*—Dante, so called because of his somber gravity. 33. *congregation*—multitude. The third and fourth sonnets are for the *Purgatorio*. 35. *Ravenna's groves*—Dante makes various references to Ravenna, where he was afterwards buried.



From the confessionals I hear arise  
 Rehearsals of forgotten tragedies,  
 And lamentations from the crypts below;  
 And then a voice celestial that begins 40  
 With the pathetic words, "Although your sins  
 As scarlet be," and ends with "as the snow."

## IV

With snow-white veil and garments as of flame,  
 She stands before thee, who so long ago  
 Filled thy young heart with passion and the woe 45  
 From which thy song and all its splendors came;  
 And while with stern rebuke she speaks thy name,  
 The ice about thy heart melts as the snow  
 On mountain heights, and in swift overflow  
 Comes gushing from thy lips in sobs of shame. 50  
 Thou makest full confession; and a gleam,  
 As of the dawn on some dark forest cast,  
 Seems on thy lifted forehead to increase;  
 Lethe and Eunoë—the remembered dream  
 And the forgotten sorrow—bring at last 55  
 That perfect pardon which is perfect peace.

## V

I lift mine eyes, and all the windows blaze  
 With forms of Saints and holy men who died,  
 Here martyred and hereafter glorified;  
 And the great Rose upon its leaves displays 60  
 Christ's Triumph, and the angelic roundelays,  
 With splendor upon splendor multiplied;  
 And Beatrice again at Dante's side  
 No more rebukes, but smiles her words of praise.  
 And then the organ sounds, and unseen choirs 65  
 Sing the old Latin hymns of peace and love  
 And benedictions of the Holy Ghost;  
 And the melodious bells among the spires  
 O'er all the house-tops and through heaven above  
 Proclaim the elevation of the Host! 70

41-42. "Although . . ."—Cf. *Purgatorio*, xxxi, line 98. 43-56. In general, this sonnet is reminiscent of *Purgatorio*, xxx-xxxi. The *She* is of course Beatrice. 54. *Lethe and Eunoë*—At the top of the Mountain of Purgatory Dante drinks of Lethe, the river of forgetfulness, and of Eunoë, the river of the memory of good. 57-59. *windows*—Continuing the figure of the cathedral, Longfellow now compares the *Paradiso* to the windows. 60. *Rose*—At the conclusion of his journey (*Paradiso*, xxxi), Dante beholds the Trinity and the blessed in the form of a rose, the blessed being seated in order in the petals of the rose. 63-64. *Beatrice*—When Beatrice first meets Dante (*Purgatorio*, xxx), she reproves him for having followed false pleasures, but her last words (*Paradiso*, xxx) are words of comfort. 66. *hymns*—Fragments of Latin hymns, used in the church service, are found throughout the *Divine Comedy*. 70. *elevation of the Host*—the supreme point in the celebration of the mass, when the consecrated elements are lifted up before the congregation.

## VI

O star of morning and of liberty!  
 O bringer of the light, whose splendor shines  
 Above the darkness of the Apennines,  
 Forerunner of the day that is to be!  
 The voices of the city and the sea, 75  
 The voices of the mountains and the pines,  
 Repeat thy song, till the familiar lines  
 Are footpaths for the thought of Italy!  
 Thy flame is blown abroad from all the heights,  
 Through all the nations, and a sound is heard, 80  
 As of a mighty wind, and men devout,  
 Strangers of Rome, and the new proselytes,  
 In their own language hear the wondrous word,  
 And many are amazed and many doubt.

## CHAUCER

Written in 1873; published in the *Masque of Pandora* volume (1875).

An old man in a lodge within a park;  
 The chamber walls depicted all around  
 With portraiture of huntsman, hawk, and  
 hound,  
 And the hurt deer. He listeneth to the lark,  
 Whose song comes with the sunshine through  
 the dark 5  
 Of painted glass in leaden lattice bound;  
 He listeneth and he laugheth at the sound,  
 Then writeth in a book like any clerk.  
 He is the poet of the dawn, who wrote  
 The Canterbury Tales, and his old age 10  
 Made beautiful with song; and as I read  
 I hear the crowing cock, I hear the note  
 Of lark and linnnet, and from every page  
 Rise odors of ploughed field or flowery mead.

## SHAKESPEARE

Written in 1873; published in the *Masque of Pandora* volume (1875).

A vision as of crowded city streets,  
 With human life in endless overflow;  
 Thunder of thoroughfares; trumpets that  
 blow

To battle; clamor, in obscure retreats,  
 Of sailors landed from their anchored fleets;  
 Tolling of bells in turrets, and below 6  
 Voices of children, and bright flowers that  
 throw  
 O'er garden-walls their intermingled sweets!  
 This vision comes to me when I unfold  
 The volume of the Poet paramount, 10  
 Whom all the Muses loved, not one alone;—  
 Into his hands they put the lyre of gold,  
 And, crowned with sacred laurel at their  
 fount,  
 Placed him as Musagetes \* on their throne.

## MILTON

Published in the *Masque of Pandora* volume (1875).

I pace the sounding sea-beach and behold  
 How the voluminous billows roll and run,  
 Upheaving and subsiding, while the sun  
 Shines through their sheeted emerald far  
 unrolled,  
 And the ninth wave, slow gathering fold by  
 fold 5  
 All its loose-flowing garments into one,  
 Plunges upon the shore, and floods the dun  
 Pale reach of sands, and changes them to  
 gold.

71-84. star—In general, Longfellow follows Byron's interpretation of Dante as a prophet of Italian freedom. Cf. *The Prophecy of Dante*. \* Musagetes—Apollo.

So in majestic cadence rise and fall  
 The mighty undulations of thy song, 10  
 O sightless bard, England's Maenonides!  
 And ever and anon, high over all  
 Uplifted, a ninth wave superb and strong,  
 Floods all the soul with its melodious seas.

### THE SOUND OF THE SEA

Written July 27, 1874; published in the  
*Masque of Pandora* volume (1875).

The sea awoke at midnight from its sleep,  
 And round the pebbly beaches far and wide

I heard the first wave of the rising tide  
 Rush onward with uninterrupted sweep;  
 A voice out of the silence of the deep, 5  
 A sound mysteriously multiplied  
 As of a cataract from the mountain's side,  
 Or roar of winds upon a wooded steep.  
 So comes to us at times, from the unknown  
 And inaccessible solitudes of being, 10  
 The rushing of the sea-tides of the soul;  
 And inspirations, that we deem our own,  
 Are some divine foreshadowing and fore-  
     seeing  
 Of things beyond our reason or control.

### MORITURI SALUTAMUS

POEM FOR THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CLASS OF 1825 IN BOWDOIN COLLEGE

*Tempora labuntur, tacitisque senescimus annis,  
 Et fugiunt freno non remorante dies.*

—Ovid, *Fastorum*, Lib. vi.

Written in 1874 and published in the *Masque of Pandora* volume (1875). The title means: "We who are about to die salute you," the legendary cry of the gladiators to the Roman Emperor on their entering the arena. The central idea of the poem is said to have been suggested by Gérôme's famous painting of such a scene. Motto: "Time passes away, we grow old with the silent years, and the days flee past with no delaying check."

"O Caesar, we who are about to die  
 Salute you!" was the gladiators' cry  
 In the arena, standing face to face  
 With death and with the Roman populace.

O ye familiar scenes,—ye groves of pine, 5  
 That once were mine and are no longer mine,—  
 Thou river, widening through the meadows green  
 To the vast sea, so near and yet unseen,—  
 Ye halls, in whose seclusion and repose  
 Phantoms of fame, like exhalations, rose 10  
 And vanished,—we who are about to die,  
 Salute you; earth and air and sea and sky,  
 And the Imperial Sun that scatters down  
 His sovereign splendors upon grove and town.

Ye do not answer us! ye do not hear! 15  
 We are forgotten; and in your austere

And calm indifference, ye little care  
 Whether we come or go, or whence or where.  
 What passing generations fill these halls,  
 What passing voices echo from these walls, 20  
 Ye heed not; we are only as the blast,  
 A moment heard, and then forever past.

Not so the teachers who in earlier days  
 Led our bewildered feet through learning's maze;  
 They answer us—alas! what have I said? 25  
 What greetings come there from the voiceless dead?  
 What salutation, welcome, or reply?  
 What pressure from the hands that lifeless lie?  
 They are no longer here; they all are gone  
 Into the land of shadows,—all save one. 30  
 Honor and reverence, and the good repute  
 That follows faithful service as its fruit,  
 Be unto him, whom living we salute.

The great Italian poet, when he made  
 His dreadful journey to the realms of shade, 35  
 Met there the old instructor of his youth,  
 And cried in tones of pity and of ruth:  
 "Oh, never from the memory of my heart  
 Your dear, paternal image shall depart,  
 Who while on earth, ere yet by death surprised, 40  
 Taught me how mortals are immortalized;  
 How grateful am I for that patient care  
 All my life long my language shall declare."

To-day we make the poet's words our own,  
 And utter them in plaintive undertone; 45  
 Nor to the living only be they said,  
 But to the other living called the dead,  
 Whose dear, paternal images appear  
 Not wrapped in gloom, but robed in sunshine here;  
 Whose simple lives, complete and without flaw, 50  
 Were part and parcel of great Nature's law;  
 Who said not to their Lord, as if afraid,  
 "Here is thy talent in a napkin laid,"  
 But labored in their sphere, as men who live  
 In the delight that work alone can give. 55  
 Peace be to them; eternal peace and rest,  
 And the fulfilment of the great behest:  
 "Ye have been faithful over a few things,  
 Over ten cities shall ye reign as kings."

And ye who fill the places we once filled, 60  
 And follow in the furrows that we tilled,

34. *Italian poet*—Dante pictures himself as meeting Brunetto Latini and so addressing him in the *Inferno*, xv, lines 82-87. Lines 38-43 are a translation of the Italian. 53. *talent*—*Cf.* Matt. 25: 14-30. 58. *faithful*—*Cf.* Luke 19: 17.

Young men, whose generous hearts are beating high,  
 We who are old, and are about to die,  
 Salute you; hail you; take your hands in ours,  
 And crown you with our welcome as with flowers! 65

How beautiful is youth! how bright it gleams  
 With its illusions, aspirations, dreams!  
 Book of Beginnings, Story without End,  
 Each maid a heroine, and each man a friend!  
 Aladdin's Lamp, and Fortunatus' Purse, 70  
 That holds the treasures of the universe!  
 All possibilities are in its hands,  
 No danger daunts it, and no foe withstands;  
 In its sublime audacity of faith,  
 "Be thou removed!" it to the mountain saith, 75  
 And with ambitious feet, secure and proud,  
 Ascends the ladder leaning on the cloud!

As ancient Priam at the Scaean gate  
 Sat on the walls of Troy in regal state  
 With the old men, too old and weak to fight, 80  
 Chirping like grasshoppers in their delight  
 To see the embattled hosts, with spear and shield,  
 Of Trojans and Achaïans in the field;  
 So from the snowy summits of our years  
 We see you in the plain, as each appears, 85  
 And question of you; asking, "Who is he  
 That towers above the others? Which may be  
 Atreides, Menelaus, Odysseus,  
 Ajax the great, or bold Idomeneus?"

Let him not boast who puts his armor on 90  
 As he who puts it off, the battle done.  
 Study yourselves; and most of all note well  
 Wherein kind Nature meant you to excel.  
 Not every blossom ripens into fruit;  
 Minerva, the inventress of the flute, 95  
 Flung it aside, when she her face surveyed  
 Distorted in a fountain as she played;  
 The unlucky Marsyas found it, and his fate  
 Was one to make the bravest hesitate.

Write on your doors the saying wise and old, 100  
 "Be bold! be bold!" and everywhere, "Be bold;  
 Be not too bold!" Yet better the excess  
 Than the defect; better the more than less;  
 Better like Hector in the field to die,  
 Than like a perfumed Paris turn and fly. 105

78. Priam—*Cf.* *Iliad*, III. 95-98. Minerva . . . Marsyas—Marsyas, having found the flute as described, challenged Apollo to a contest. Apollo won, bound Marsyas to a tree, and flayed him alive. 101. "Be bold!"—*Cf.* Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Bk. III, canto XI, line 54. 104-05. Hector . . . Paris—*Cf.* *Iliad*, III and XXII.

And now, my classmates; ye remaining few  
 That number not the half of those we knew,  
 Ye, against whose familiar names not yet  
 The fatal asterisk of death is set,  
 Ye I salute! The horologe of Time 110  
 Strikes the half-century with a solemn chime,  
 And summons us together once again,  
 The joy of meeting not unmixed with pain.

Where are the others? Voices from the deep  
 Caverns of darkness answer me: "They sleep!" 115  
 I name no names; instinctively I feel  
 Each at some well-remembered grave will kneel,  
 And from the inscription wipe the weeds and moss,  
 For every heart best knoweth its own loss.  
 I see their scattered gravestones gleaming white 120  
 Through the pale dusk of the impending night;  
 O'er all alike the impartial sunset throws  
 Its golden lilies mingled with the rose;  
 We give to each a tender thought, and pass  
 Out of the graveyards with their tangled grass, 125  
 Unto these scenes frequented by our feet  
 When we were young, and life was fresh and sweet.

What shall I say to you? What can I say  
 Better than silence is? When I survey  
 This throng of faces turned to meet my own, 130  
 Friendly and fair, and yet to me unknown,  
 Transformed the very landscape seems to be;  
 It is the same, yet not the same to me.  
 So many memories crowd upon my brain,  
 So many ghosts are in the wooded plain, 135  
 I fain would steal away, with noiseless tread,  
 As from a house where some one lieth dead.  
 I cannot go;—I pause;—I hesitate;  
 My feet reluctant linger at the gate;  
 As one who struggles in a troubled dream 140  
 To speak and cannot, to myself I seem.

Vanish the dream! Vanish the idle fears!  
 Vanish the rolling mists of fifty years!  
 Whatever time or space may intervene,  
 I will not be a stranger in this scene. 145  
 Here every doubt, all indecision, ends;  
 Hail, my companions, comrades, classmates, friends!

Ah me! the fifty years since last we met  
 Seem to me fifty folios bound and set  
 By Time, the great transcriber, on his shelves, 150  
 Wherein are written the histories of ourselves.

109. asterisk—It is customary to indicate the names of deceased members of a college class by printing an asterisk beside their names.

What tragedies, what comedies, are there;  
 What joy and grief, what rapture and despair!  
 What chronicles of triumph and defeat,  
 Of struggle, and temptation, and retreat! 155  
 What records of regrets, and doubts, and fears!  
 What pages blotted, blistered by our tears!  
 What lovely landscapes on the margin shine,  
 What sweet, angelic faces, what divine  
 And holy images of love and trust, 160  
 Undimmed by age, unsoiled by damp or dust!

Whose hand shall dare to open and explore  
 These volumes, closed and clasped forevermore?  
 Not mine. With reverential feet I pass;  
 I hear a voice that cries, "Alas! alas! 165  
 Whatever hath been written shall remain,  
 Nor be erased nor written o'er again;  
 The unwritten only still belongs to thee:  
 Take heed, and ponder well what that shall be."

As children frightened by a thunder-cloud 170  
 Are reassured if some one reads aloud  
 A tale of wonder, with enchantment fraught,  
 Or wild adventure, that diverts their thought,  
 Let me endeavor with a tale to chase  
 The gathering shadows of the time and place 175  
 And banish what we all too deeply feel  
 Wholly to say, or wholly to conceal.

In mediaeval Rome, I know not where,  
 There stood an image with its arm in air,  
 And on its lifted finger, shining clear, 180  
 A golden ring with the device, "Strike here!"  
 Greatly the people wondered, though none guessed  
 The meaning that these words but half expressed,  
 Until a learned clerk, who at noonday  
 With downcast eyes was passing on his way, 185  
 Paused, and observed the spot, and marked it well,  
 Whereon the shadow of the finger fell;  
 And, coming back at midnight, delved, and found  
 A secret stairway leading underground.  
 Down this he passed into a spacious hall, 190  
 Lit by a flaming jewel on the wall;  
 And opposite, in threatening attitude,  
 With bow and shaft a brazen statue stood.  
 Upon its forehead, like a coronet,  
 Were these mysterious words of menace set: 195  
 "That which I am, I am; my fatal aim  
 None can escape, not even yon luminous flame!"

Midway the hall was a fair table placed,  
 With cloth of gold, and golden cups enchased  
 With rubies, and the plates and knives were gold. 200  
 And gold the bread and viands manifold.  
 Around it, silent, motionless, and sad,  
 Were seated gallant knights in armor clad,  
 And ladies beautiful with plume and zone,  
 But they were stone, their hearts within were stone; 205  
 And the vast hall was filled in every part  
 With silent crowds, stony in face and heart.

Long at the scene, bewildered and amazed,  
 The trembling clerk in speechless wonder gazed;  
 Then from the table, by his greed made bold, 210  
 He seized a goblet and a knife of gold,  
 And suddenly from their seats the guests upsprang,  
 The vaulted ceiling with loud clamors rang,  
 The archer sped his arrow at their call,  
 Shattering the lambent jewel on the wall, 215  
 And all was dark around and overhead;—  
 Stark on the floor the luckless clerk lay dead!

The writer of this legend then records  
 Its ghostly application in these words:  
 The image is the Adversary old, 220  
 Whose beckoning finger points to realms of gold;  
 Our lusts and passions are the downward stair  
 That leads the soul from a diviner air;  
 The archer, Death; the flaming jewel, Life;  
 Terrestrial goods, the goblet and the knife; 225  
 The knights and ladies, all whose flesh and bone  
 By avarice have been hardened into stone;  
 The clerk, the scholar whom the love of pelf  
 Tempts from his books and from his nobler self.

The scholar and the world! The endless strife, 230  
 The discord in the harmonies of life!  
 The love of learning, the sequestered nooks,  
 And all the sweet serenity of books;  
 The market-place, the eager love of gain,  
 Whose aim is vanity, and whose end is pain! 235

But why, you ask me, should this tale be told  
 To men grown old, or who are growing old?  
 It is too late! Ah, nothing is too late  
 Till the tired heart shall cease to palpitate.  
 Cato learned Greek at eighty; Sophocles 240  
 Wrote his grand *Oedipus*, and Simonides

219. ghostly—spiritual. 240. Cato—Cato the Censor (234-149 B.C.). 240. Sophocles—Sophocles (495-405 B.C.) is said to have written his *Oedipus at Colonus* just before his death. 241. Simonides—(556-467 B.C.) one of the great Greek lyric poets of his age.



Bore off the prize of verse from his compeers,  
 When each had numbered more than fourscore years,  
 And Theophrastus, at fourscore and ten,  
 Had but begun his "Characters of Men." 245  
 Chaucer, at Woodstock with the nightingales,  
 At sixty wrote the Canterbury Tales;  
 Goethe at Weimar, toiling to the last,  
 Completed Faust when eighty years were past.  
 These are indeed exceptions; but they show 250  
 How far the gulf-stream of our youth may flow  
 Into the arctic regions of our lives,  
 Where little else than life itself survives.

As the barometer foretells the storm  
 While still the skies are clear, the weather warm, 255  
 So something in us, as old age draws near,  
 Betrays the pressure of the atmosphere.  
 The nimble mercury, ere we are aware,  
 Descends the elastic ladder of the air;  
 The telltale blood in artery and vein 260  
 Sinks from its higher levels in the brain;  
 Whatever poet, orator, or sage  
 May say of it, old age is still old age.  
 It is the waning, not the crescent moon;  
 The dusk of evening, not the blaze of noon; 265  
 It is not strength, but weakness; not desire,  
 But its surcease; not the fierce heat of fire,  
 The burning and consuming element,  
 But that of ashes and of embers spent,  
 In which some living sparks we still discern, 270  
 Enough to warm, but not enough to burn.

What then? Shall we sit idly down and say  
 The night hath come; it is no longer day?  
 The night hath not yet come; we are not quite  
 Cut off from labor by the failing light; 275  
 Something remains for us to do or dare;  
 Even the oldest tree some fruit may bear;  
 Not Oedipus Coloneus, or Greek Ode,  
 Or tales of pilgrims that one morning rode  
 Out of the gateway of the Tabard Inn, 280  
 But other something, would we but begin;  
 For age is opportunity no less  
 Than youth itself, though in another dress,  
 And as the evening twilight fades away  
 The sky is filled with stars, invisible by day. 285

244. Theophrastus—(382-297 B.C.) author of *Moral Characters*, one of the Greek prose classics. 246. Chaucer—See Longfellow's sonnet "Chaucer," p. 631. 248. Goethe—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) began work on his *Faust* in 1773, but the conclusion did not appear until the year following his death.

## THE CROSS OF SNOW

Written July 10, 1879; published in the *Life*. Suggested by an illustrated book of Western scenery which contained a picture of Holy Cross Mountain, Colorado. The sonnet was found in Longfellow's portfolio after his death. The reference, of course, is to the tragic death of the second Mrs. Longfellow.

In the long, sleepless watches of the night,  
A gentle face—the face of one long dead—  
Looks at me from the wall, where round its  
head  
The night-lamp casts a halo of pale light.  
Here in this room she died; and soul more  
white  
Never through martyrdom of fire was led  
To its repose; nor can in books be read  
The legend of a life more benedight.  
There is a mountain in the distant West,  
That, sun-defying, in its deep ravines 10  
Displays a cross of snow upon its side.  
Such is the cross I wear upon my breast  
These eighteen years, through all the chang-  
ing scenes  
And seasons, changeless since the day she  
died.

## VICTOR AND VANQUISHED

Written April 4, 1876; published in *In the Harbor* (1882).

As one who long hath fled with panting  
breath  
Before his foe, bleeding and near to fall,  
I turn and set my back against the wall,  
And look thee in the face, triumphant  
Death.  
I call for aid, and no one answereth; 5  
I am alone with thee, who conquerest all;  
Yet me thy threatening form doth not  
appall,  
For thou art but a phantom and a wraith.  
Wounded and weak, sword broken at the hilt,  
With armor shattered, and without a  
shield, 10

I stand unmoved; do with me what thou  
wilt;  
I can resist no more, but will not yield.  
This is no tournament where cowards tilt;  
The vanquished here is victor of the field.

## A DUTCH PICTURE

Published in *Kéramos and Other Poems* (1878). The incidents seem to be imaginary.

Simon Danz has come home again,  
From cruising about with his buccaneers;  
He has singed the beard of the King of Spain,  
And carried away the Dean of Jaen \*  
And sold him in Algiers. 5

In his house by the Maese, with its roof of  
tiles  
And weathercocks flying aloft in air,  
There are silver tankards of antique styles,  
Plunder of convent and castle, and piles  
Of carpets rich and rare. 10

In his tulip garden there by the town  
Overlooking the sluggish stream,  
With his Moorish cap and dressing-gown  
The old sea-captain, hale and brown,  
Walks in a waking dream. 15

A smile in his gray mustachio lurks  
Whenever he thinks of the King of Spain,  
And the listed tulips look like Turks,  
And the silent gardener as he works  
Is changed to the Dean of Jaen. 20

The windmills on the outermost  
Verge of the landscape in the haze,  
To him are towers on the Spanish coast,  
With whiskered sentinels at their post,  
Though this is the river Maese. 25

But when the winter rains begin,  
He sits and smokes by the blazing brands,  
And old sea-faring men come in,  
Goat-bearded, gray, and with double chin,  
And rings upon their hands. 30

\* **Jaen**—properly Jaén, a city and province in Andalusia. 6. **Maese**—the Dutch name for the Meuse River. 18. **listed**—enlisted(?); bent over(?).

They sit there in the shadow and shine  
 Of the flickering fire of the winter night:  
 Figures in color and design  
 Like those by Rembrandt of the Rhine,  
 Half darkness and half light. 35

And they talk of their ventures lost or won,  
 And their talk is ever and ever the same,  
 While they drink the red wine of Tarra-  
 gon,  
 From the cellars of some Spanish Don,  
 Or convent set on flame. 40

Restless at times, with heavy strides  
 He paces his parlor to and fro;  
 He is like a ship that at anchor rides,  
 And swings with the rising and falling  
 tides,  
 And tugs at her anchor-tow. 45

Voices mysterious far and near,  
 Sound of the wind and sound of the sea,  
 Are calling and whispering in his ear,  
 "Simon Danz! Why stayest thou here?  
 Come forth and follow me!" 50

So he thinks he shall take to the sea again  
 For one more cruise with his buccaneers,  
 To singe the beard of the King of Spain,  
 And capture another Dean of Jaen  
 And sell him in Algiers. 55

## JUGURTHA

Written in 1879, published in the *Ultima Thule* volume (1880). The incident is told in Plutarch's life of Marius, Chapter xii, but in the original Jugurtha addresses Hercules. Jugurtha (died 104 B.C.) was a king of Numidia, defeated by the Romans.

How cold are thy baths, Apollo!  
 Cried the African monarch, the splendid,  
 As down to his death in the hollow  
 Dark dungeons of Rome he descended,  
 Uncrowned, unthroned, unattended; 5  
 How cold are thy baths, Apollo!

**34. Rembrandt of the Rhine**—Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669), the great Dutch painter, whose later work especially is notable for its manipulation of light and shadow. **38. Tarragon**—Tarragona is a province in northeastern Spain.

How cold are thy baths, Apollo!  
 Cried the Poet, unknown, unbefriended,  
 As the vision, that lured him to follow,  
 With the mist and the darkness blended, 10  
 And the dream of his life was ended;  
 How cold are thy baths, Apollo!

## THE TIDE RISES, THE TIDE FALLS

Written September 11, 1879; published in the *Ultima Thule* volume (1880).

The tide rises, the tide falls,  
 The twilight darkens, the curlew calls;  
 Along the sea-sands damp and brown  
 The traveller hastens toward the town,  
 And the tide rises, the tide falls. 5

Darkness settles on roofs and walls,  
 But the sea, the sea in the darkness calls;  
 The little waves, with their soft, white hands,  
 Efface the footprints in the sands,  
 And the tide rises, the tide falls. 10

The morning breaks; the steeds in their stalls  
 Stamp and neigh, as the hostler calls;  
 The day returns, but nevermore  
 Returns the traveller to the shore,  
 And the tide rises, the tide falls. 15

## ULTIMA THULE

This was the dedicatory poem of the volume by that name, and was addressed to George Washington Greene, author of a *Life of Nathanael Greene*, dedicated to Longfellow, a lifelong friend.

With favoring winds, o'er sunlit seas,  
 We sailed for the Hesperides,  
 The land where golden apples grow;  
 But that, ah! that was long ago.

How far since then the ocean streams 5  
 Have swept us from the land of dreams,

That land of fiction and of truth,  
The lost Atlantis of our youth!

Whither, ah, whither? are not these  
The tempest-haunted Hebrides, 10  
Where sea-gulls scream, and breakers roar,  
And wreck and sea-weed line the shore?

Ultima Thule! Utmost Isle!  
Here in thy harbors for awhile  
We lower our sails, awhile we rest 15  
From the unending endless quest.

### THE BELLS OF SAN BLAS

The last poem by Longfellow, written March 12-15, 1882. The subject was suggested by an article in *Harper's Magazine* (March, 1882). Published in *In the Harbor* (1882).

What say the Bells of San Blas  
To the ships that southward pass  
From the harbor of Mazatlan?  
To them it is nothing more  
Than the sound of surf on the shore,— 5  
Nothing more to master or man.

But to me, a dreamer of dreams,  
To whom what is and what seems  
Are often one and the same,—  
The Bells of San Blas to me 10  
Have a strange, wild melody,  
And are something more than a name.

For bells are the voice of the church;  
They have tones that touch and search  
The hearts of young and old; 15  
One sound to all, yet each  
Lends a meaning to their speech,  
And the meaning is manifold.

They are a voice of the Past  
Of an age that is fading fast, 20

Of a power austere and grand;  
When the flag of Spain unfurled  
Its folds o'er this western world,  
And the Priest was lord of the land.

The chapel that once looked down 25  
On the little seaport town  
Has crumbled into the dust;  
And on oaken beams below  
The bells swing to and fro,  
And are green with mould and rust. 30

"Is, then, the old faith dead,"  
They say, "and in its stead  
Is some new faith proclaimed,  
That we are forced to remain  
Naked to sun and rain, 35  
Unsheltered and ashamed?"

"Once in our tower aloof  
We rang over wall and roof  
Our warnings and our complaints;  
And round about us there 40  
The white doves filled the air,  
Like the white souls of the saints.

"The saints! Ah, have they grown  
Forgetful of their own?  
Are they asleep, or dead, 45  
That open to the sky  
Their ruined Missions lie,  
No longer tenanted?"

"Oh, bring us back once more  
The vanished days of yore, 50  
When the world with faith was filled;  
Bring back the fervid zeal,  
The hearts of fire and steel,  
The hands that believe and build.

"Then from our tower again 55  
We will send over land and main  
Our voices of command,  
Like exiled kings who return  
To their thrones, and the people learn  
That the Priest is lord of the land!" 60

8. *Atlantis*—a fabled land of happy people long since lost in the sea. 13. *Ultima Thule*—that part of the world regarded by the ancients as most remote. 1. *San Blas*—an inlet on the northern side of the Isthmus of Panama. The legend is that the bells of a sacked convent, being thrown into the sea, are still heard to ring. 3. *Mazatlan*—a town and harbor on the southern coast of the Mexican state of Sinaloa.

O Bells of San Blas, in vain  
 Ye call back the Past again!  
 The Past is deaf to your prayer;

Out of the shadows of night  
 The world rolls into light;  
 It is daybreak everywhere.

[A NATIONAL LITERATURE]

This selection is from Chapter xx of *Kavanagh*, a slight romance, really a succession of sketches, published in 1849. Mr. Churchill is the village schoolmaster of Fairmeadow.

**M**EANWHILE, things had gone on very quietly and monotonously in Mr. Churchill's family. Only one event, and that a mysterious one, had disturbed its serenity. It was the sudden disappearance of Lucy, the pretty orphan girl; and, as the booted centipede, who had so much excited Mr. Churchill's curiosity, disappeared at the same time, there was little doubt that they had gone away together. But whither gone, and wherefore, remained a mystery.

Mr. Churchill, also, had had his profile, and those of his wife and children, taken, in a very humble style, by Mr. Bantam, whose advertisement he had noticed on his way to school nearly a year before. His own was considered the best, as a work of art. The face was cut out entirely; the color of the coat velvet; the shirt-collar very high and white; and the top of his head ornamented with a crest of hair turning up in front, though his own turned down,—which slight deviation from nature was explained and justified by the painter as a license allowable in art.

One evening, as he was sitting down to begin, for at least the hundredth time, the great Romance,—subject of so many resolves and so much remorse, so often determined upon but never begun,—a loud knock at the street-door, which stood wide open, announced a visitor. Unluckily, the study-door was likewise open; and consequently, being in full view, he found it impossible to refuse himself; nor, in fact, would have done so, had all the doors been shut and bolted,—the art of refusing one's self being at that time but imperfectly understood in Fairmeadow. Accordingly, the visitor was shown in.

He announced himself as Mr. Hathaway. Passing through the village, he could not deny himself the pleasure of calling on Mr. Churchill, whom he knew by his writings in the periodicals, though not personally. He wished, moreover, to secure the co-operation of one, already so favorably known to the literary world, in a new Magazine he was about to establish, in order to raise the character of American literature, which, in his opinion, the existing reviews and magazines had entirely failed to accomplish. A daily increasing want of something better was felt by the public; and the time had come for the establishment of such a periodical as he proposed. After explaining, in rather a florid and exuberant manner, his plans and prospects, he entered more at large

4. **booted centipede**—In Chap. I Churchill meets "an ill-looking man, carrying so many old boots that he seemed literally buried in them." 8. **profile**—silhouette. 28. **Magazine**—Most magazines of the period had such prospectuses.

into the subject of American literature, which it was his design to foster and patronize.

"I think, Mr. Churchill," said he, "that we want a national literature commensurate with our mountains and rivers,—commensurate with Niagara, and the Alleghanies, and the Great Lakes!"

5

"Oh!"

"We want a national epic that shall correspond to the size of the country; that shall be to all other epics what Banvard's Panorama of the Mississippi is to all other paintings,—the largest in the world!"

"Ah!"

10

"We want a national drama in which scope enough shall be given to our gigantic ideas, and to the unparalleled activity and progress of our people!"

"Of course."

"In a word, we want a national literature altogether shaggy and unshorn, that shall shake the earth, like a herd of buffaloes thundering over the prairies!"

15

"Precisely," interrupted Mr. Churchill; "but excuse me!—are you not confounding things that have no analogy? Great has a very different meaning when applied to a river, and when applied to a literature. Large and shallow may perhaps be applied to both. Literature is rather an image of the spiritual world, than of the physical, is it not?—of the internal, rather than the external. Mountains, lakes, and rivers are, after all, only its scenery and decorations, not its substance and essence. A man will not necessarily be a great poet because he lives near a great mountain. Nor, being a poet, will he necessarily write better poems than another, because he lives nearer Niagara."

20

"But, Mr. Churchill, you do not certainly mean to deny the influence of scenery on the mind?"

25

"No, only to deny that it can create genius. At best, it can only develop it. Switzerland has produced no extraordinary poet; nor, as far as I know, have the Andes, or the Himalaya mountains, or the Mountains of the Moon in Africa."

30

"But, at all events," urged Mr. Hathaway, "let us have our literature national. If it is not national, it is nothing."

"On the contrary, it may be a great deal. Nationality is a good thing to a certain extent, but universality is better. All that is best in the great poets of all countries is not what is national in them, but what is universal. Their roots are in their native soil; but their branches wave in the unpatriotic air, that speaks the same language unto all men, and their leaves shine with the illimitable light that pervades all lands. Let us throw all the windows open; let us admit the light and air on all sides; that we may look toward the four corners of the heavens, and not always in the same direction."

35

"But you admit nationality to be a good thing?"

40

"Yes, if not carried too far; still, I confess, it rather limits one's views of truth. I prefer what is natural. Mere nationality is often ridiculous. Every one smiles

8. **Banvard's Panorama**—On Dec. 19, 1845, Longfellow went to see "Banvard's moving diorama of the Mississippi. One seems to be sailing down the great stream, and sees the boats and the sand-banks crested with cottonwood, and the bayous by moonlight. Three miles of canvas, and a great deal of merit." He used his impressions in Pt. II of *Evangeline*.

when he hears the Icelandic proverb, 'Iceland is the best land the sun shines upon.' Let us be natural, and we shall be national enough. Besides, our literature can be strictly national only so far as our character and modes of thought differ from those of other nations. Now, as we are very like the English,—are, in fact, English under a different sky,—I do not see how our literature can be very different from theirs. Westward from hand to hand we pass the lighted torch, but it was lighted at the old domestic fireside of England."

"Then you think our literature is never to be anything but an imitation of the English?"

10 "Not at all. It is not an imitation, but, as some one has said, a continuation."  
"It seems to me that you take a very narrow view of the subject."

"On the contrary, a very broad one. No literature is complete until the language in which it is written is dead. We may well be proud of our task and of our position. Let us see if we can build in any way worthy of our fore-  
15 fathers."

"But I insist on originality."

"Yes; but without spasms and convulsions. Authors must not, like Chinese soldiers, expect to win victories by turning somersets in the air."

"Well, really, the prospect from your point of view is not very brilliant. Pray,  
20 what do you think of our national literature?"

"Simply, that a national literature is not the growth of a day. Centuries must contribute their dew and sunshine to it. Our own is growing slowly but surely, striking its roots downward and its branches upward, as is natural; and I do not wish, for the sake of what some people call originality, to invert it, and  
25 try to make it grow with its roots in the air. And as for having it so savage and wild as you want it, I have only to say, that all literature, as well as all art, is the result of culture and intellectual refinement."

"Ah! we do not want art and refinement; we want genius,—untutored, wild, original, free."

30 "But, if this genius is to find any expression, it must employ art, for art is the external expression of our thoughts. Many have genius, but, wanting art, are for ever dumb. The two must go together to form the great poet, painter, or sculptor."

"In that sense, very well."

35 "I was about to say also that I thought our literature would finally not be wanting in a kind of universality.

"As the blood of all nations is mingling with our own, so will their thoughts and feelings finally mingle in our literature. We shall draw from the Germans, tenderness; from the Spaniards, passion; from the French, vivacity, to mingle  
40 more and more with our English solid sense. And this will give us universality, so much to be desired."

# JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

1807-1892

## I. NEWSPAPER POET AND "COUNTRY" EDITOR (1807-1833)

- 1807 December 17, born on farm near Haverhill, Massachusetts, eldest son and second child of John and Abigail Hussey Whittier. Attended country schools.
- 1821 Introduced to the poetry of Burns by Joshua Coffin, the schoolmaster.
- 1826 June 8, first poem, "The Exile's Departure," printed in the *Newburyport Free Press*, edited by William Lloyd Garrison. Beginning of lifelong friendship. Whittier learned shoemaking.
- 1827 May 1, entered Haverhill Academy. Poems by Whittier appeared in various newspapers. During the winter 1827-28, he taught school.
- 1828 November 8, first prose article (on Burns) printed in the *Haverhill Gazette*. In December, Whittier entered the printing and publishing offices of W. and W. R. Collier, in Boston, editing the *American Manufacturer*, a pro-Clay paper.
- 1829 August, returned to farm, and from January to June, 1830, edited the *Haverhill Gazette*.
- 1830 June to July, 1832, edited the *New England Review* at Hartford, Connecticut, returning to Haverhill early in 1832. Father died June 11.
- 1831 February, *Legends of New England* published (prose), Whittier's first book. *Moll Pitcher* published (revised, 1840). During these years Whittier's writing steadily increased in bulk, and he became known as a newspaper contributor.

## II. THE ANTISLAVERY FIGHT (1833-1865)

- 1833 Published *Justice and Expediency* (Haverhill), first formal antislavery pronouncement. In November, elected delegate to the National Anti-Slavery Convention in Philadelphia.
- 1835 Elected to the Massachusetts Legislature. *Mogg Megone* published in the *New England Magazine* (March-April), appearing in book form in 1836. Whittier now commenced that career of agitation which exposed him and his friends to mob violence.
- 1836 Editor, the *Haverhill Gazette*. Sold the Haverhill farm in April, and removed to Amesbury in July.
- 1837 *Poems written during the Progress of the Abolition Question in the United States* (Boston) published. Whittier active as a lobbyist and politician. In October, first poem in the *Democratic Review*, to which Whittier contributed for ten years.
- 1838 Active in abolitionist propaganda in Philadelphia, with frequent trips to Massachusetts. Finally returned to Amesbury, which became his headquarters. *Poems* (Philadelphia) published.



- 1843 *Lays of My Home and Other Poems* (Boston) published.
- 1844 Virtual editor of the Amesbury *Village Transcript* (became the *Essex Transcript*). *Miscellaneous Poems* (Boston) published.
- 1845 Friendship with Charles Sumner began. Made contributing editor to the *National Era* (to 1860). *The Stranger in Lowell* (Boston) published.
- 1846 *Voices of Freedom* (Philadelphia) published.
- 1849 *Margaret Smith's Journal* published serially in the *National Era* (book form, same year). *Poems* (Boston) published.
- 1850 London edition of *Poetical Works. Songs of Labor and Other Poems* (Boston) and *Old Portraits and Modern Sketches* (Boston) published.
- 1853 *The Chapel of the Hermits and Other Poems* (Boston) published.
- 1854 *Literary Recreations and Miscellanies* (Boston) published.
- 1855 Read "The Panorama" at Tremont Temple, Boston (book form, 1856).
- 1857 "Blue and Gold" edition of *Poetical Works*. "The Gift of Tritemus" in the first number of the *Atlantic Monthly*.
- 1858 Mother died.
- 1860 January 7, sister Mary died. *Home Ballads, Poems and Lyrics* (Boston) published.
- 1863 "Barbara Frietchie" in the October *Atlantic Monthly*. *In War Time and Other Poems* (Boston) published.
- 1864 September 3, sister Elizabeth died.
- 1865 "Laus Deo" in the *Independent*, February 9. Whittier attended a meeting at Faneuil Hall with R. H. Dana, Jr., and others to outline plans for reconstruction.

### III. THE GRAND OLD MAN (1865-1892)

- 1866 *Snow-Bound* published; first volume to bring Whittier money. *Prose Works* (2 vols.). Both published in Boston.
- 1867 *Maud Muller* published. During 1867-68 Whittier, whose health was never good, was severely ill. *National Lyrics* (Boston) and *The Tent on the Beach and Other Poems* (Boston) published.
- 1869 *Among the Hills and Other Poems* (Boston) and *Poetical Works* (Boston) published.
- 1870 *Ballads of New England* (Boston) published.
- 1871 *Miriam and Other Poems* (Boston) published; Whittier edited *Child Life*, a poetical anthology (Boston).
- 1872 *The Pennsylvania Pilgrim and Other Poems* (Boston) published; edited *The Journal of John Woolman* (Boston).
- 1874 Edited *Child Life in Prose* (Boston); published *Mabel Martin and Other Poems* (Boston). Household edition of *Works* published.
- 1875 *Hazel Blossoms* (Boston) published.
- 1876 Edited *Songs of Three Centuries* (Boston).
- 1877 Seventieth birthday celebrated widely; *Atlantic Monthly* dinner. *Favorite Poems* published.
- 1878 *The Vision of Echard and Other Poems* (Boston) published.
- 1880 W. M. Rossetti contributed critical biography to London edition of *Complete Poetical Works*.
- 1881 *The King's Missive and Other Poems* (Boston) published.
- 1883 *The Bay of Seven Islands and Other Poems* (Boston) published.
- 1886 *Saint Gregory's Guest and Recent Poems* (Boston) published.
- 1887 Eightieth birthday widely celebrated.

- 1888 *Complete Poetical and Prose Works* (7 vols.) published—Riverside and Large Paper editions.  
 1892 *At Sundown* (poems) published in Boston (two editions). Whittier died September 7.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY AND EDITIONS: T. F. Currier, *Bibliography of John Greenleaf Whittier*, Harvard University Press, 1937. See also *Literary History of the United States*, Vol. III, pp. 769-72.

*The Complete Poetical and Prose Works of John Greenleaf Whittier*, Houghton Mifflin, 7 vols., were issued in 1888-89 as the Riverside and Large Paper editions. To be preferred are the Standard Library and Artists' editions, 7 vols., 1892. For poetry, the *Complete Poetical Works of John Greenleaf Whittier*, ed. by H. E. Scudder, Houghton Mifflin, 1894 (Cambridge edition), is usually sufficient. See Harry H. Clark, ed., *John Greenleaf Whittier, Representative Selections*, American Book Co., 1935.

The five volumes covering the years 1928-32 of the great *Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature* published by the Modern Humanities Research Association contain but one reference to an article having to do with Whittier, and that one is a reprint of an uncollected poem. This remarkable neglect of a poet who once loomed so large in the literary heavens is perhaps unfair to his genuine worth, but it points to a decline and fall of fame greater than in the case of any other of the "standard" American poets. Why should this be?

For one thing, a large portion of Whittier's writing was occasional. The anti-slavery crusade, which roused his Quaker pen to a heat of un-Quaker-like anger, is a closed book; and few American readers are sufficiently interested to uncover the episodes which called forth "Massachusetts to Virginia" or "Ichabod." Many of his poems were, like "The Centennial Hymn," in the stricter sense, written for occasions. Rare, indeed, is the occasional poem which so surpasses the episode that brought it forth as to endure when the occasion passes, and Whittier was not the man to write such a poem. He was too facile, too good-natured; he never comprehended the fatal confusion between having to write a poem and having a poem to write.

In the next place, Whittier's poetry is simple, direct, and nonintellectual; and the whole movement in recent and contemporary poetry has been in the direction of intellectualized verse. But this movement has not prevented the recognition of the genre studies of poets like Robert Frost; and it is a defect in contemporary taste

which applauds the admirable vignettes of New England in the one poet and neglects the equally admirable vignettes of the other. Whittier is not intellectualistic, but he has at his best a capacity for sharp actuality in verse; and no poem in the English language does quite what "Snow-Bound" does in recapturing the charm of a lost chapter of life.

Moreover, a distinction must be made between sentimentality and simplicity. Whittier is, alas! too often sentimental, but he is also capable of a directness, a simplicity, which are among the rarer poetic accomplishments. Even one who does not share the religious point of view of Whittier may well admire the lucent candor of some of his religious poems. There is a hearty honesty, moreover, about his simple stories of New England life, his celebrations of the dignity of labor, his dogged and quiet faith in goodness, which are as much a part of the American tradition as poets more loudly celebrated. He was once too highly praised; he is now probably too greatly neglected; and the task of the student may well be to try to ascertain what his enduring claims upon our attention truly are.

### THE MORAL WARFARE

This poem first appears among Whittier's collected verse in the *Poems* of 1838, and was republished in *Voices of Freedom* (1846). It then took its place in the various editions of the collected poems; and in 1888-89 appears among the "Anti-Slavery Poems," a place which it retains in 1892. The theme is the replacement of physical warfare by moral struggle; and the reader may, if he likes, interpret the "natal day" of Freedom as the American Declaration of Independence.

When Freedom, on her natal day,  
Within her war-rocked cradle lay,  
An iron race around her stood,  
Baptized her infant brow in blood;  
And, through the storm which round her  
swept, 5  
Their constant ward and watching kept.

Then, where our quiet herds repose  
The roar of baleful battle rose,  
And brethren of a common tongue  
To mortal strife as tigers sprung, 10  
And every gift on Freedom's shrine  
Was man for beast, and blood for wine!

Our fathers to their graves have gone;  
Their strife is past, their triumph won;  
But sterner trials wait the race 15  
Which rises in their honored place;  
A moral warfare with the crime  
And folly of an evil time.

So let it be. In God's own might  
We gird us for the coming fight, 20  
And, strong in Him whose cause is ours  
In conflict with unholy powers,  
We grasp the weapons He has given,—  
The Light, and Truth, and Love of Heaven.

### MEMORIES

This poem first appeared in *Lays of My Home and Other Poems* (1843), and was republished in *Songs of Labor and Other Poems* (1850). In 1888-89 it forms part of "Poems Subjective and Reminiscent," a place it retains in 1892. The subject of the poem is unknown.

A beautiful and happy girl,  
With step as light as summer air,  
Eyes glad with smiles, and brow of pearl,  
Shadowed by many a careless curl  
Of unconfined and flowing hair; 5  
A seeming child in everything,  
Save thoughtful brow and ripening charms,  
As Nature wears the smile of Spring  
When sinking into Summer's arms.

A mind rejoicing in the light 10  
Which melted through its graceful bower,  
Leaf after leaf, dew-moist and bright,  
And stainless in its holy white,  
Unfolding like a morning flower:  
A heart, which, like a fine-toned lute, 15  
With every breath of feeling woke,  
And, even when the tongue was mute,  
From eye and lip in music spoke.

How thrills once more the lengthening chain  
 Of memory, at the thought of thee! 20  
 Old hopes which long in dust have lain,  
 Old dreams, come thronging back again,  
 And boyhood lives again in me;  
 I feel its glow upon my cheek,  
 Its fulness of the heart is mine, 25  
 As when I leaned to hear thee speak,  
 Or raised my doubtful eye to thine.

I hear again thy low replies,  
 I feel thy arm within my own,  
 And timidly again uprise 30  
 The fringed lids of hazel eyes,  
 With soft brown tresses overblown.  
 Ah! memories of sweet summer eves,  
 Of moonlit wave and willowy way,  
 Of stars and flowers, and dewy leaves, 35  
 And smiles and tones more dear than they!

Ere this, thy quiet eye hath smiled  
 My picture of thy youth to see,  
 When, half a woman, half a child,  
 Thy very artlessness beguiled, 40  
 And folly's self seemed wise in thee;  
 I too can smile, when o'er that hour  
 The lights of memory backward stream,  
 Yet feel the while that manhood's power  
 Is vainer than my boyhood's dream. 45

Years have passed on, and left their trace,  
 Of graver care and deeper thought;  
 And unto me the calm, cold face  
 Of manhood, and to thee the grace  
 Of woman's pensive beauty brought. 50

More wide, perchance, for blame than praise,  
 The school-boy's humble name has flown;  
 Thine, in the green and quiet ways  
 Of unobtrusive goodness known.

And wider yet in thought and deed 55  
 Diverge our pathways, one in youth;  
 Thine the Genevan's sternest creed,  
 While answers to my spirit's need  
 The Derby dalesman's simple truth.  
 For thee, the priestly rite and prayer, 60  
 And holy day, and solemn psalm;  
 For me, the silent reverence where  
 My brethren gather, slow and calm.

Yet hath thy spirit left on me  
 An impress Time has worn not out, 65  
 And something of myself in thee,  
 A shadow from the past, I see,  
 Lingering, even yet, thy way about;  
 Not wholly can the heart unlearn  
 That lesson of its better hours, 70  
 Not yet has Time's dull footstep worn  
 To common dust that path of flowers.

Thus, while at times before our eyes  
 The shadows melt, and fall apart,  
 And, smiling through them, round us lies  
 The warm light of our morning skies,— 76  
 The Indian Summer of the heart!  
 In secret sympathies of mind,  
 In founts of feeling which retain  
 Their pure, fresh flow, we yet may find 80  
 Our early dreams not wholly vain!

## MASSACHUSETTS TO VIRGINIA

First published in the *Liberator*, January 27, 1843, this poem then appeared in the *Lays of My Home* volume (1843), with the following introductory note:

"Written on reading an account of the proceedings of the citizens of Norfolk (Va.) in reference to GEORGE LATIMER, the alleged fugitive slave, the result of whose case in Massachusetts will probably be similar to that of the negro SOMERSET in England, in 1772."

The poem and the note then reappeared in *Voices of Freedom* (1846) and in the various editions of *Poetical Works*. In *National Lyrics* (1865) the poem appears without the note, as it does in *Favorite Poems* (1877). In the 1888-89 edition, it ap-

57. *Genevan's*—John Calvin (1509-1564). 59. *Derby dalesman's*—Apparently George Fox (1624-1691) is meant, who, though born in Leicestershire, was first imprisoned for preaching his beliefs in Derbyshire in 1650.

pears among the "Anti-Slavery Poems," with the following revised version of the introductory note:

"Written on reading an account of the proceedings of the citizens of Norfolk, Va., in reference to George Latimer, the alleged fugitive slave, who was seized in Boston without warrant at the request of James B. Grey, of Norfolk, claiming to be his master. The case caused great excitement North and South, and led to the presentation of a petition to Congress, signed by more than fifty thousand citizens of Massachusetts, calling for such laws and proposed amendments to the Constitution as should relieve the Commonwealth from all further participation in the crime of oppression. George Latimer himself was finally given free papers for the sum of four hundred dollars."

The 1892 edition reprints the 1888-89 version. There were various typographical changes among the editions.

The blast from Freedom's Northern hills, upon its Southern way,  
Bears greeting to Virginia from Massachusetts Bay:  
No word of haughty challenging, nor battle bugle's peal,  
Nor steady tread of marching files, nor clang of horsemen's steel,

No train of deep-mouthed cannon along our highways go;  
Around our silent arsenals untrodden lies the snow;  
And to the land-breeze of our ports, upon their errands far,  
A thousand sails of commerce swell, but none are spread for war.

5

We hear thy threats, Virginia! thy stormy words and high  
Swell harshly on the Southern winds which melt along our sky;  
Yet not one brown, hard hand foregoes its honest labor here,  
No hewer of our mountain oak suspends his axe in fear.

10

Wild are the waves which lash the reefs along St. George's bank;  
Cold on the shores of Labrador the fog lies white and dank;  
Through storm, and wave, and blinding mist, stout are the hearts which man  
The fishing-smacks of Marblehead, the sea-boats of Cape Ann.

15

The cold north light and wintry sun glare on their icy forms,  
Bent grimly o'er their straining lines or wrestling with the storms;  
Free as the winds they drive before, rough as the waves they roam,  
They laugh to scorn the slaver's threat against their rocky home.

20

What means the Old Dominion? Hath she forgot the day  
When o'er her conquered valleys swept the Briton's steel array?

13. **St. George's bank**—one hundred miles east of Cape Cod, and frequented by fishermen. 16. **Marblehead**—town near Salem, noted for its fishing business. 16. **Cape Ann**—the easternmost projection of Massachusetts, save for Cape Cod, and a home of fishermen. 21. **Old Dominion**—After Gates's defeat at Camden, Virginia was overrun by a British army, variously commanded by Tarleton, Benedict Arnold, and Cornwallis. The Virginia Legislature and the governor (Jefferson) were compelled to flee. Greene's campaign in South Carolina gradually forced the British to the seacoast; Cornwallis took refuge in Yorktown; and the armies of Washington and Rochambeau ended the war by marching from the Hudson to Yorktown, which capitulated Oct. 19, 1781.

How, side by side with sons of hers, the Massachusetts men  
Encountered Tarleton's charge of fire, and stout Cornwallis, then?

Forgets she how the Bay State, in answer to the call 25  
Of her old House of Burgesses, spoke out from Faneuil Hall?  
When, echoing back her Henry's cry, came pulsing on each breath  
Of Northern winds the thrilling sounds of 'Liberty or Death!'

What asks the Old Dominion? If now her sons have proved 30  
False to their fathers' memory, false to the faith they loved;  
If she can scoff at Freedom, and its great charter spurn,  
Must we of Massachusetts from truth and duty turn?

We hunt your bondmen, flying from Slavery's hateful hell;  
Our voices, at your bidding, take up the bloodhound's yell;  
We gather, at your summons, above our fathers' graves, 35  
From Freedom's holy altar-horns to tear your wretched slaves!

Thank God! not yet so vilely can Massachusetts bow;  
The spirit of her early time is with her even now;  
Dream not because her Pilgrim blood moves slow and calm and cool,  
She thus can stoop her chainless neck, a sister's slave and tool! 40

All that a sister State should do, all that a free State may,  
Heart, hand, and purse we proffer, as in our early day;  
But that one dark loathsome burden ye must stagger with alone,  
And reap the bitter harvest which ye yourselves have sown!

Hold, while ye may, your struggling slaves, and burden God's free air 45  
With woman's shriek beneath the lash, and manhood's wild despair;  
Cling closer to the 'cleaving curse' that writes upon your plains  
The blasting of Almighty wrath against a land of chains.

Still shame your gallant ancestry, the cavaliers of old,  
By watching round the shambles where human flesh is sold; 50  
Gloat o'er the new-born child, and count his market value, when  
The maddened mother's cry of woe shall pierce the slaver's den!

Lower than plummet soundeth, sink the Virginia name;  
Plant, if ye will, your fathers' graves with rankest weeds of shame;  
Be, if ye will, the scandal of God's fair universe; 55  
We wash our hands forever of your sin and shame and curse.

25. **Bay State**—Resolutions adopted by the Virginia burgesses (legislators) in 1769 and again in 1774 were promptly echoed in Massachusetts. 26. **Faneuil Hall**—in Boston is especially associated with patriotic meetings of the eighteenth century. 27. **Henry**—Patrick Henry's famous speech was delivered in a Richmond church in March, 1775. Whittier quotes the last phrase and also echoes the sentence: "The next gale which sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms." 31. **great charter**—the Declaration of Independence, mainly written by the Virginian, Jefferson, which declares that all men are created equal. 36. **altar-horns**—*Cf.* I Kings 1:50. 47. **cleaving curse**—*Cf.* Gen. 4:11-12. Theological supporters of slavery sometimes argued that the Negro race inherited the curse of Cain; and sometimes, that set on Hagar and Ishmael (Gen. 21:12 ff.). 53. **plummet**—*Cf.* *Tempest*, Act III, Scene 3, line 101.

A voice from lips whereon the coal from Freedom's shrine hath been,  
 Thrilled, as but yesterday, the hearts of Berkshire's mountain men:  
 The echoes of that solemn voice are sadly lingering still  
 In all our sunny valleys, on every wind-swept hill.

60

And when the prowling man-thief came hunting for his prey  
 Beneath the very shadow of Bunker's shaft of gray,  
 How, through the free lips of the son, the father's warning spoke;  
 How, from its bonds of trade and sect, the Pilgrim city broke!

A hundred thousand right arms were lifted up on high,  
 A hundred thousand voices sent back their loud reply;  
 Through the thronged towns of Essex the startling summons rang,  
 And up from bench and loom and wheel her young mechanics sprang!

65

The voice of free, broad Middlesex, of thousands as of one,  
 The shaft of Bunker calling to that of Lexington;  
 From Norfolk's ancient villages, from Plymouth's rocky bound  
 To where Nantucket feels the arms of ocean close her round;

70

From rich and rural Worcester, where through the calm repose  
 Of cultured vales and fringing woods the gentle Nashua flows,  
 To where Wachuset's wintry blasts the mountain larches stir,  
 Swelled up to Heaven the thrilling cry of 'God save Latimer!'

75

And sandy Barnstable rose up, wet with the salt sea spray;  
 And Bristol sent her answering shout down Narragansett Bay!  
 Along the broad Connecticut old Hampden felt the thrill,  
 And the cheer of Hampshire's woodmen swept down from Holyoke Hill.

80

The voice of Massachusetts! Of her free sons and daughters,  
 Deep calling unto deep aloud, the sound of many waters!  
 Against the burden of that voice what tyrant power shall stand?  
 No fetters in the Bay State! No slave upon her land!

Look to it well, Virginians! In calmness we have borne,  
 In answer to our faith and trust, your insult and your scorn;  
 You've spurned our kindest counsels; you've hunted for our lives;  
 And shaken round our hearths and homes your manacles and gyves!

85

We wave no war, we lift no arm, we fling no torch within  
 The fire-damps of the quaking mine beneath your soil of sin;  
 We leave ye with your bondmen, to wrestle, while ye can,  
 With the strong upward tendencies and godlike soul of man!

90

58. **Berkshire's**—The westernmost county in Massachusetts contains the Berkshire Mountains. 61-64. **prowling . . . broke**—This stanza is sufficiently explained by the introductory note. 67. **Essex**—Whittier now passes in review the counties of Massachusetts. A glance at the map will show the appropriateness of his poetical descriptions. 74. **Nashua**—the Nashua River. 75. **Wachuset's**—a mountain near Fitchburg, Massachusetts. 79. **Hampden**—Hampden County is split in two by the Connecticut River. 80. **Holyoke Hill**—The Holyoke range lies on either side of the Connecticut River in Hampshire County. 81. **voice of Massachusetts**—As the poem was first read to the Essex County convention held at Ipswich Jan. 2, 1843, the appropriateness of the phraseology to Whittier's purpose is evident.

But for us and for our children, the vow which we have given  
 For freedom and humanity is registered in heaven;  
 No slave-hunt in our borders, no pirate on our strand!  
 No fetters in the Bay State—no slave upon our land!

95

## PROEM

Dated "Amesbury, 11 mo., 1847," this poem first appears as the preface to the *Poems* of 1849, and thereafter as the preface to each collected edition.

I love the old melodious lays  
 Which softly melt the ages through,  
 The songs of Spenser's golden days,  
 Arcadian Sidney's silvery phrase,  
 Sprinkling our noon of time with freshest  
 morning dew. 5

Yet, vainly in my quiet hours  
 To breathe their marvellous notes I try;  
 I feel them, as the leaves and flowers  
 In silence feel the dewy showers,  
 And drink with glad, still lips the blessing of  
 the sky. 10

The rigor of a frozen clime,  
 The harshness of an untaught ear,  
 The jarring words of one whose rhyme  
 Beat often Labor's hurried time,  
 Or Duty's rugged march through storm and  
 strife, are here. 15

Of mystic beauty, dreamy grace,  
 No rounded art the lack supplies;  
 Unskilled the subtle lines to trace,  
 Or softer shades of Nature's face,  
 I view her common forms with unanointed  
 eyes. 20

Nor mine the seer-like power to show  
 The secrets of the heart and mind;  
 To drop the plummet-line below  
 Our common world of joy and woe,  
 A more intense despair or brighter hope to  
 find. 25

Yet here at least an earnest sense  
 Of human right and weal is shown;  
 A hate of tyranny intense,  
 And hearty in its vehemence,  
 As if my brother's pain and sorrow were my  
 own. 30

O Freedom! if to me belong  
 Nor mighty Milton's gift divine,  
 Nor Marvell's wit and graceful song,  
 Still with a love as deep and strong  
 As theirs, I lay, like them, my best gifts on  
 thy shrine! 35

## ICHABOD

First published in the *National Era*, May 2, 1850, this poem was collected into the second part of the *Songs of Labor* volume of that year. It remained consistently in the various collected editions, and also appeared in *National Lyrics* (1865) and *Favorite Poems* (1877). In 1888-89 and 1892 it was put under "Personal Poems," and prefaced by the following note:

"This poem was the outcome of the surprise and grief and forecast of evil consequences which I felt on reading the seventh of March speech of Daniel Webster in support of the 'compromise' and the Fugitive Slave Bill. No partisan or personal enmity dictated it. On the contrary my admiration of the splendid personality and intellectual power of the great Senator was never stronger than when I laid down his speech, and, in one of the saddest moments of my life, penned my protest. I saw, as I wrote, with painful clearness its sure results,—the Slave Power arrogant and defiant, strengthened and encouraged to carry out its scheme

3. Spenser's—Edmund Spenser (about 1552-1599). 4. Sidney's—Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586), author of *Arcadia*, a pastoral romance. 32. Milton's—John Milton (1608-1674). 33. Marvell's—Andrew Marvell (1621-1678).



for the extension of its baleful system, or the dissolution of the Union, the guaranties of personal liberty in the free States broken down, and the whole country made the hunting-ground of slave-catchers. In the horror of such a vision, so soon fearfully fulfilled, if one spoke at all, he could only speak in tones of stern and sorrowful rebuke.

"But death softens all resentments, and the consciousness of a common inheritance of frailty and weakness modifies the severity of judgment. Years after, in *The Lost Occasion* I gave utterance to an almost universal regret that the great statesman did not live to see the flag which he loved trampled under the feet of Slavery, and, in view of this desecration, make his last days glorious in defence of 'Liberty and Union, one and inseparable.'"

The significance of the title may be learned by consulting I Sam. 4: 21. Whittier's view of the significance of the Seventh of March Speech is no longer held by any competent historian.

So fallen! so lost! the light withdrawn  
Which once he wore!  
The glory from his gray hairs gone  
Forevermore!

Revile him not, the Tempter hath      5  
A snare for all;  
And pitying tears, not scorn and wrath,  
Befit his fall!

Oh, dumb be passion's stormy rage,  
When he who might      10  
Have lighted up and led his age,  
Falls back in night.

Scorn! would the angels laugh, to mark  
A bright soul driven,  
Fiend-goaded, down the endless dark,      15  
From hope and heaven!

Let not the land once proud of him  
Insult him now,  
Nor brand with deeper shame his dim,  
Dishonored brow.      20

But let its humbled sons, instead,  
From sea to lake,

A long lament, as for the dead,  
In sadness make.

Of all we loved and honored, naught      25  
Save power remains;  
A fallen angel's pride of thought,  
Still strong in chains.

All else is gone; from those great eyes  
The soul has fled:      30  
When faith is lost, when honor dies,  
The man is dead!

Then pay the reverence of old days  
To his dead fame;  
Walk backward, with averted gaze,      35  
And hide the shame!

## SONGS OF LABOR, DEDICATION

First printed in *Songs of Labor and Other Poems* (1850). In 1888-89 and 1892 preceded by the note:

"Prefixed to the volume of which the group of six poems following this prelude constituted the first portion."

I would the gift I offer here  
Might grace from thy favor take,  
And, seen through Friendship's atmosphere,  
On softened lines and coloring, wear  
The unaccustomed light of beauty, for thy      5  
sake.

Few leaves of Fancy's spring remain:  
But what I have I give to thee,  
The o'er-sunned bloom of summer's plain,  
And paler flowers, the latter rain  
Calls from the westerling slope of life's au-      10  
tumnal lea.

Above the fallen groves of green,  
Where youth's enchanted forest stood,  
Dry root and mossed trunk between,  
A sober after-growth is seen,  
As springs the pine where falls the gay-leaved      15  
maple wood!

Yet birds will sing, and breezes play  
 Their leaf-harps in the sombre tree;  
 And through the bleak and wintry day  
 It keeps its steady green away,—  
 So, even my after-thoughts may have a charm  
 for thee. 20

Art's perfect forms no moral need,  
 And beauty is its own excuse;  
 But for the dull and flowerless weed  
 Some healing virtue still must plead,  
 And the rough ore must find its honors in  
 its use. 25

So haply these, my simple lays  
 Of homely toil, may serve to show  
 The orchard bloom and tasselled maize  
 That skirt and gladden duty's ways,  
 The unsung beauty hid life's common things  
 below. 30

Haply from them the toiler, bent  
 Above his forge or plough, may gain  
 A manlier spirit of content,  
 And feel that life is wisest spent  
 Where the strong working hand makes  
 strong the working brain. 35

The doom which to the guilty pair  
 Without the walls of Eden came,  
 Transforming sinless ease to care  
 And rugged toil, no more shall bear  
 The burden of old crime, or mark of primal  
 shame. 40

A blessing now, a curse no more;  
 Since He, whose name we breathe with  
 awe,  
 The coarse mechanic vesture wore,  
 A poor man toiling with the poor, 44  
 In labor, as in prayer, fulfilling the same law.

## THE SHOEMAKERS

This poem first appears among Whittier's volumes in *Songs of Labor and Other Poems* (1850). Until 1888 it retained its place in the "Songs of Labor" section of the various collected editions. In 1888-89 and 1892 it took its place in "Songs of Labor and Reform." Whittier wrote a series of poems celebrating various trades—characteristically, he selected those common in Massachusetts—and though "The Shoemakers" is not the best of these, its appropriateness to this selection is evident since Whittier was himself a shoemaker.

Ho! workers of the old time styled  
 The Gentle Craft of Leather!  
 Young brothers of the ancient guild,  
 Stand forth once more together!  
 Call out again your long array, 5  
 In the olden merry manner!  
 Once more, on gay St. Crispin's day,  
 Fling out your blazoned banner!

Rap, rap! upon the well-worn stone  
 How falls the polished hammer! 10  
 Rap, rap! the measured sound has grown  
 A quick and merry clamor.  
 Now shape the sole! now deftly curl  
 The glossy vamp around it,  
 And bless the while the bright-eyed girl 15  
 Whose gentle fingers bound it!

For you, along the Spanish main  
 A hundred keels are ploughing;  
 For you, the Indian on the plain  
 His lasso-coil is throwing; 20  
 For you, deep glens with hemlock dark  
 The woodman's fire is lighting;  
 For you, upon the oak's gray bark,  
 The woodman's axe is smiting.

21-22. Art's . . . beauty—Cf. Emerson, "The Rhodora," line 12. 36. doom—Cf. Gen. 3. 2. Gentle Craft—The reference is (1) to the medieval guild of shoemakers; and (2) to *The Gentle Craft. A Discourse . . . Shewing what famous men have been shoemakers . . .* (1597) by Thomas Deloney (1543-1600). 7. St. Crispin's day—Two brothers, Crispin and Crispinian, shoemakers both, were Christian martyrs, being put to death in the third century. Their day is Oct. 25. 15. girl—Note the reference to the employment of women in factory work in Massachusetts. 17. Spanish main—the American mainland adjacent to the Caribbean from Panama to the mouth of the Orinoco; also the adjoining sea. 19-20. Indian . . . throwing—Indian cowboys on the Argentine pampas, whence a large part of the supply of cowhides comes. 21. hemlock—Whittier has in mind the sources of the bark used in tanning leather.

For you, from Carolina's pine  
 The rosin-gum is stealing;  
 For you, the dark-eyed Florentine  
 Her silken skein is reeling;  
 For you, the dizzy goatherd roams  
 His rugged Alpine ledges;  
 For you, round all her shepherd homes  
 Bloom England's thorny hedges.

The foremost still, by day or night,  
 On moated mound of heather,  
 Where'er the need of trampled right  
 Brought toiling men together;  
 Where the free burghers from the wall  
 Defied the mail-clad master,  
 Than yours at Freedom's trumpet-call,  
 No craftsmen rallied faster.

Let foplings sneer, let fools deride,  
 Ye heed no idle scorner;  
 Free hands and hearts are still your pride,  
 And duty done your honor.  
 Ye dare to trust, for honest fame,  
 The jury Time empanels,  
 And leave to truth each noble name  
 Which glorifies your annals.

Thy songs, Hans Sachs, are living yet,  
 In strong and hearty German;  
 And Bloomfield's lay, and Gifford's wit,  
 And patriot fame of Sherman;  
 Still from his book, a mystic seer,  
 The soul of Behmen teaches,  
 And England's priesthood shakes to hear  
 Of Fox's leathern breeches.

The foot is yours; where'er it falls,  
 It treads your well-wrought leather,  
 On earthen floor, in marble halls,  
 On carpet, or on heather.

25 Still there the sweetest charm is found  
 Of matron grace or vestal's,  
 As Hebe's foot bore nectar round  
 Among the old celestials!

30 Rap, rap!—your stout and bluff brogan, 65  
 With footsteps slow and weary,  
 May wander where the sky's blue span  
 Shuts down upon the prairie.  
 On Beauty's foot your slippers glance,  
 By Saratoga's fountains, 70  
 Or twinkle down the summer dance  
 Beneath the Crystal Mountains!

The red brick to the mason's hand,  
 The brown earth to the tiller's,  
 40 The shoe in yours shall wealth command, 75  
 Like fairy Cinderella's!  
 As they who shunned the household maid  
 Beheld the crown upon her,  
 So all shall see your toil repaid  
 With hearth and home and honor. 80

Then let the toast be freely quaffed,  
 In water cool and brimming,—  
 "All honor to the good old Craft,  
 Its merry men and women!"  
 50 Call out again your long array, 85  
 In the old time's pleasant manner:  
 Once more, on gay St. Crispin's day,  
 Fling out his blazoned banner!

## FIRST-DAY THOUGHTS

First collected in *The Chapel of the Hermits and Other Poems* (1853); in 1888-89 and 1892 printed among "Religious Poems."

60 The Quaker custom of avoiding the

27. Florentine—The silk-making industry of northern Italy. Cf. Browning's *Pippa Passes*. 31. round—The rime has forced a certain obscurity. Whittier has in mind that England produces sheep and wool (as part of his picture of the geographical romance of shoemaking), but he has put his case backward. 49. Sachs—Hans Sachs (1494-1576), the greatest German poet of his time, was a cobbler of Nuremberg. 51. Bloomfield's—Robert Bloomfield (1766-1823), one of the "uneducated poets," was once apprenticed to shoemaking. 51. Gifford's—William Gifford (1756-1826), editor of the *Quarterly Review*, was once a cobbler. 52. Sherman—Roger Sherman (1721-1793), signer of the Declaration of Independence, and once a shoemaker. 54. Behmen—Jakob Boehme (1575-1624), German mystic; once a shoemaker. 56. Fox's—See note 7, p. 445. The leathern breeches of Fox are famous in Quaker annals. 63. Hebe's—cupbearer of the gods on Olympus. 70. Saratoga's—Saratoga Springs, New York, long a famous summer resort. What Whittier means by the Crystal Mountains seems to be the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

"heathen" names of days of the week gives meaning to the title.

In calm and cool and silence, once again  
I find my old accustomed place among  
My brethren, where, perchance, no human  
tongue

Shall utter words; where never hymn is  
sung,

Nor deep-toned organ blown, nor censer  
swung, 5

Nor dim light falling through the pictured  
panel!

There, syllabled by silence, let me hear  
The still small voice which reached the  
prophet's ear;

Read in my heart a still diviner law  
Than Israel's leader on his tables saw! 10

There let me strive with each besetting sin,  
Recall my wandering fancies, and restrain

The sore disquiet of a restless brain; 13  
And, as the path of duty is made plain,

May grace be given that I may walk therein,  
Not like the hireling, for his selfish gain,

With backward glances and reluctant tread,  
Making a merit of his coward dread,

But, cheerful, in the light around me  
thrown,

Walking as one to pleasant service led;  
Doing God's will as if it were my own, 21

Yet trusting not in mine, but in his strength  
alone!

## BURNS

### ON RECEIVING A SPRIG OF HEATHER IN BLOSSOM

First collected in *The Panorama and Other Poems* (1856); in 1888-89 and 1892 printed among "Personal Poems." The passage which describes Whittier reading Burns during harvest time is autobiographical. The references to poems by Burns are largely self-explanatory.

No more these simple flowers belong  
To Scottish maid and lover;

10. Israel's leader—Moses.

Sown in the common soil of song,  
They bloom the wide world over.

In smiles and tears, in sun and showers, 5  
The minstrel and the heather,  
The deathless singer and the flowers  
He sang of live together.

Wild heather-bells and Robert Burns!  
The moorland flower and peasant! 10  
How, at their mention, memory turns  
Her pages old and pleasant!

The gray sky wears again its gold  
And purple of adorning,  
And manhood's noonday shadows hold 15  
The dews of boyhood's morning.

The dews that washed the dust and soil  
From off the wings of pleasure,  
The sky, that flecked the ground of toil 20  
With golden threads of leisure.

I call to mind the summer day,  
The early harvest mowing,  
The sky with sun and clouds at play,  
And flowers with breezes blowing.

I hear the blackbird in the corn, 25  
The locust in the haying;  
And, like the fabled hunter's horn,  
Old tunes my heart is playing.

How oft that day, with fond delay,  
I sought the maple's shadow, 30  
And sang with Burns the hours away,  
Forgetful of the meadow!

Bees hummed, birds twittered, overhead  
I heard the squirrels leaping,  
The good dog listened while I read, 35  
And wagged his tail in keeping.

I watched him while in sportive mood  
I read "The Twa Dogs" story,  
And half believed he understood  
The poet's allegory. 40

Sweet day, sweet songs! The golden hours  
 Grew brighter for that singing,  
 From brook and bird and meadow flowers  
 A dearer welcome bringing.

New light on home-seen Nature beamed, 45  
 New glory over Woman;  
 And daily life and duty seemed  
 No longer poor and common.

I woke to find the simple truth  
 Of fact and feeling better 50  
 Than all the dreams that held my youth  
 A still repining debtor:

That Nature gives her handmaid, Art,  
 The themes of sweet discoursing;  
 The tender idyls of the heart 55  
 In every tongue rehearsing.

Why dream of lands of gold and pearl,  
 Of loving knight and lady,  
 When farmer boy and barefoot girl  
 Were wandering there already? 60

I saw through all familiar things  
 The romance underlying;  
 The joys and griefs that plume the wings  
 Of Fancy skyward flying.

I saw the same blithe day return, 65  
 The same sweet fall of even,  
 That rose on wooded Craigie-burn,  
 And sank on crystal Devon.

I matched with Scotland's heathery hills  
 The sweetbrier and the clover; 70  
 With Ayr and Doon, my native rills,  
 Their wood hymns chanting over.

O'er rank and pomp, as he had seen,  
 I saw the Man uprising;  
 No longer common or unclean, 75  
 The child of God's baptizing!

With clearer eyes I saw the worth  
 Of life among the lowly;

The Bible at his Cotter's hearth  
 Had made my own more holy. 80

And if at times an evil strain,  
 To lawless love appealing,  
 Broke in upon the sweet refrain  
 Of pure and healthful feeling,

It died upon the eye and ear, 85  
 No inward answer gaining;  
 No heart had I to see or hear  
 The discord and the staining.

Let those who never erred forget  
 His worth, in vain bewailings; 90  
 Sweet Soul of Song! I own my debt  
 Uncancelled by his failings!

Lament who will the ribald line  
 Which tells his lapse from duty,  
 How kissed the maddening lips of wine 95  
 Or wanton ones of beauty;

But think, while falls that shade between  
 The erring one and Heaven,  
 That he who loved like Magdalen,  
 Like her may be forgiven. 100

Not his the song whose thunderous chime  
 Eternal echoes render;  
 The mournful Tuscan's haunted rhyme,  
 And Milton's starry splendor! 105

But who his human heart has laid  
 To Nature's bosom nearer? 105  
 Who sweetened toil like him, or paid  
 To love a tribute dearer?

Through all his tuneful art, how strong  
 The human feeling gushes! 110  
 The very moonlight of his song  
 Is warm with smiles and blushes!

Give lettered pomp to teeth of Time,  
 So "Bonnie Doon" but tarry;  
 Blot out the Epic's stately rhyme, 115  
 But spare his "Highland Mary"!

67-68. *Craigie-burn* . . . *Devon*—*Cf.* Burns's poem, "Craigieburn Wood" and his "The Banks of the Devon." 99. *Magdalen*—*Cf.* Luke 7: 37-47. 103. *Tuscan's*—Dante.

THE LAST WALK IN  
AUTUMN

After publication in 1878, this first appeared in the *Poetical Works*, Vol. II (1857), among "Later Poems." In 1888-89 and 1892 it appears among "Poems of Nature."

## I

O'er the bare woods, whose outstretched  
hands  
Plead with the leaden heavens in vain,  
I see, beyond the valley lands,  
The sea's long level dim with rain.  
Around me all things, stark and dumb, 5  
Seem praying for the snows to come,  
And, for the summer bloom and greenness  
gone,  
With winter's sunset lights and dazzling  
morn atone.

## II

Along the river's summer walk,  
The withered tufts of asters nod; 10  
And trembles on its arid stalk  
The hoar plume of the golden-rod.  
And on a ground of sombre fir,  
And azure-studded juniper,  
The silver birch its buds of purple shows, 15  
And scarlet berries tell where bloomed the  
sweet wild-rose!

## III

With mingled sound of horns and bells,  
A far-heard clang, the wild geese fly,  
Storm-sent, from Arctic moors and fells,  
Like a great arrow through the sky, 20  
Two dusky lines converged in one,  
Chasing the southward-flying sun;  
While the brave snow-bird and the hardy jay  
Call to them from the pines, as if to bid them  
stay.

## IV

I passed this way a year ago: 25  
The wind blew south; the noon of day  
Was warm as June's; and save that snow  
Fiecked the low mountains far away,

And that the vernal-seeming breeze  
Mocked faded grass and leafless trees, 30  
I might have dreamed of summer as I lay,  
Watching the fallen leaves with the soft wind  
at play.

## V

Since then, the winter blasts have piled  
The white pagodas of the snow  
On these rough slopes, and, strong and  
wild, 35  
Yon river, in its overflow  
Of spring-time rain and sun, set free,  
Crashed with its ices to the sea;  
And over these gray fields, then green and  
gold,  
The summer corn has waved, the thunder's  
organ rolled.

## VI

Rich gift of God! A year of time!  
What pomp of rise and shut of day,  
What hues wherewith our Northern clime  
Makes autumn's dropping woodlands  
gay, 45  
What airs outblown from ferny dells,  
And clover-bloom and sweetbrier smells,  
What songs of brooks and birds, what fruits  
and flowers,  
Green woods and moonlit snows, have in its  
round been ours!

## VII

I know not how, in other lands,  
The changing seasons come and go; 50  
What splendors fall on Syrian sands,  
What purple lights on Alpine snow!  
Nor how the pomp of sunrise waits  
On Venice at her watery gates;  
A dream alone to me is Arno's vale, 55  
And the Alhambra's halls are but a traveller's  
tale.

## VIII

Yet, on life's current, he who drifts  
Is one with him who rows or sails;  
And he who wanders widest lifts  
No more of beauty's jealous veils 60  
Than he who from his doorway sees  
The miracle of flowers and trees,

51. Syrian—The point is that Whittier has never seen Palestine, the Alps, Italy, or Spain.

Feels the warm Orient in the noonday air,  
And from cloud minarets hears the sunset call  
to prayer!

## IX

The eye may well be glad that looks 65  
Where Pharpar's fountains rise and fall;  
But he who sees his native brooks  
Laugh in the sun, has seen them all.  
The marble palaces of Ind  
Rise round him in the snow and wind; 70  
From his lone sweetbrier Persian Hafiz  
smiles,  
And Rome's cathedral awe is in his woodland  
aisles.

## X

And thus it is my fancy blends  
The near at hand and far and rare;  
And while the same horizon bends 75  
Above the silver-sprinkled hair  
Which flashed the light of morning skies  
On childhood's wonder-lifted eyes,  
Within its round of sea and sky and field,  
Earth wheels with all her zones, the Kosmos  
stands revealed. 80

## XI

And thus the sick man on his bed,  
The toiler to his task-work bound,  
Behold their prison-walls outspread,  
Their clipped horizon widen round!  
While freedom-giving fancy waits, 85  
Like Peter's angel at the gates,  
The power is theirs to baffle care and pain,  
To bring the lost world back, and make it  
theirs again!

## XII

What lack of goodly company,  
When masters of the ancient lyre 90

Obeys my call, and trace for me  
Their words of mingled tears and fire!  
I talk with Bacon, grave and wise,  
I read the world with Pascal's eyes;  
And priest and sage, with solemn brows  
austere, 95  
And poets, garland-bound, the Lords of  
Thought, draw near.

## XIII

Methinks, O friend, I hear thee say,  
"In vain the human heart we mock;  
Bring living guests who love the day,  
Not ghosts who fly at crow of cock! 100  
The herbs we share with flesh and blood  
Are better than ambrosial food  
With laurelled shades." I grant it, nothing  
loath,  
But doubly blest is he who can partake of  
both.

## XIV

He who might Plato's banquet grace, 105  
Have I not seen before me sit,  
And watched his puritanic face,  
With more than Eastern wisdom lit?  
Shrewd mystic! who, upon the back  
Of his Poor Richard's Almanac 110  
Writing the Sufi's song, the Gentoo's dream,  
Links Manu's age of thought to Fulton's age  
of steam!

## XV

Here too, of answering love secure,  
Have I not welcomed to my hearth  
The gentle pilgrim troubadour, 115  
Whose songs have girdled half the earth;  
Whose pages, like the magic mat  
Whereon the Eastern lover sat,  
Have borne me over Rhine-land's purple  
vines,

66. *Pharpar's*—*Cf.* II Kings 5: 12. 71. *Hafiz*—Persian lyric poet of the fourteenth century. 72. *Rome's cathedral*—the cathedral of St. Peter in Rome. 80. *Kosmos*—system of the universe. 86. *Peter's angel*—*Cf.* Acts 5: 19. 93. *Bacon*—Francis Bacon (1561-1626); the reference is especially to his *Essays*. 94. *Pascal's*—Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), whose *Pensées* are one of the religious classics of the world. 105. *Plato's banquet*—The reference is to a Platonic dialogue called *The Symposium*. Emerson is, of course, meant; and Whittier has in mind Emerson's love for Oriental books of wisdom. 110. *Poor Richard's Almanac*—that is, standing as a representative for American "horse sense." 111. *Sufi's*—a mystic sect among the Mohammedans of Persia. 112. *Gentoo's*—Hindu; an oblique reference to Brahminism. 112. *Manu's*—the supposed lawgiver of the Hindus. 112. *Fulton's*—Robert Fulton (1765-1815), American inventor of the steamboat. 115. *pilgrim troubadour*—Bayard Taylor (1825-1878), to whose travel books and poems the following lines have reference.

And Nubia's tawny sands, and Phrygia's  
mountain pines! 120

## XVI

And he, who to the lettered wealth  
Of ages adds the lore unpriced,  
The wisdom and the moral health,  
The ethics of the school of Christ;  
The statesman to his holy trust, 125  
As the Athenian archon, just,  
Struck down, exiled like him for truth alone,  
Has he not graced my home with beauty all  
his own?

## XVII

What greetings smile, what farewells wave,  
What loved ones enter and depart! 130  
The good, the beautiful, the brave,  
The Heaven-lent treasures of the heart!  
How conscious seems the frozen sod  
And beechen slope whereon they trod!  
The oak-leaves rustle, and the dry grass  
bends 135  
Beneath the shadowy feet of lost or absent  
friends.

## XVIII

Then ask not why to these bleak hills  
I cling, as clings the tufted moss,  
To bear the winter's lingering chills,  
The mocking spring's perpetual loss. 140  
I dream of lands where summer smiles,  
The soft winds blow from spicy isles,  
But scarce would Ceylon's breath of flowers  
be sweet,  
Could I not feel thy soil, New England, at  
my feet!

## XIX

At times I long for gentler skies, 145  
And bathe in dreams of softer air,  
But homesick tears would fill the eyes  
That saw the Cross without the Bear.

The pine must whisper to the palm,  
The north-wind break the tropic calm; 150  
And with the dreamy languor of the Line,  
The North's keen virtue blend, and strength  
to beauty join.

## XX

Better to stem with heart and hand  
The roaring tide of life, than lie,  
Unmindful, on its flowery strand, 155  
Of God's occasions drifting by!  
Better with naked nerve to bear  
The needles of this goading air,  
Than, in the lap of sensual ease, forego  
The godlike power to do, the godlike aim to  
know. 160

## XXI

Home of my heart! to me more fair  
Than gay Versailles or Windsor's halls,  
The painted, shingly town-house where  
The freeman's vote for Freedom falls!  
The simple roof where prayer is made,  
Than Gothic groin and colonnade; 166  
The living temple of the heart of man,  
Than Rome's sky-mocking vault, or many-  
spired Milan!

## XXII

More dear thy equal village schools,  
Where rich and poor the Bible read, 170  
Than classic halls where Priestcraft rules,  
And Learning wears the chains of Creed;  
Thy glad Thanksgiving, gathering in  
The scattered sheaves of home and kin,  
Than the mad license ushering Lenten  
pains, 175  
Or holidays of slaves who laugh and dance in  
chains.

## XXIII

And sweet homes nestle in these dales,  
And perch along these wooded swells;

121. And he—Charles Sumner (1811-1874), senator from Massachusetts, who, after a vigorous attack on slavery, in 1856, was caned by Congressman Preston Brooks. 126. Athenian archon—Aristides, exiled from Athens according to legend because people grew tired of hearing him called "the Just." 148. Cross . . . Bear—that is, eyes that saw the Southern Cross (the principal constellation in the southern heavens). The Great Bear (the Dipper) is not visible in the Southern Hemisphere. 151. Line—the equator. 162. Versailles . . . Windsor's—types of royal palaces. 166. Gothic . . . colonnade—Gothic cathedrals as housing Roman Catholic worship. 168. Rome's . . . vault—Cf. note 72, p. 660. 168. Milan—The cathedral at Milan is famous. 175. license—In many Italian cities, such as Rome, a carnival season precedes Lent, and is marked by masking and merrymaking. When Whittier wrote, Italian independence had not been attained; hence the "holidays of slaves" reference in line 176.



And, blest beyond Arcadian vales,  
 They hear the sound of Sabbath bells!  
 Here dwells no perfect man sublime, 181  
 Nor woman winged before her time,  
 But with the faults and follies of the race,  
 Old home-bred virtues hold their not un-  
 honored place.

## XXIV

Here manhood struggles for the sake 185  
 Of mother, sister, daughter, wife,  
 The graces and the loves which make  
 The music of the march of life;  
 And woman, in her daily round  
 Of duty, walks on holy ground. 190  
 No unpaid menial tills the soil, nor here  
 Is the bad lesson learned at human rights to  
 sneer.

## XXV

Then let the icy north-wind blow  
 The trumpets of the coming storm,  
 To arrowy sleet and blinding snow 195  
 Yon slanting lines of rain transform.  
 Young hearts shall hail the drifted cold,  
 As gayly as I did of old;  
 And I, who watch them through the frosty  
 pane,  
 Unenvious, live in them my boyhood o'er  
 again. 200

## XXVI

And I will trust that He who heeds  
 The life that hides in mead and wold,  
 Who hangs yon alder's crimson beads,  
 And stains these mosses green and gold,  
 Will still, as He hath done, incline 205  
 His gracious care to me and mine;  
 Grant what we ask aright, from wrong debar,  
 And, as the earth grows dark, make brighter  
 every star!

## XXVII

I have not seen, I may not see,  
 My hopes for man take form in fact, 210  
 But God will give the victory  
 In due time; in that faith I act.  
 And he who sees the future sure,  
 The baffling present may endure,

And bless, meanwhile, the unseen Hand that  
 leads 215  
 The heart's desires beyond the halting step of  
 deeds.

## XXVIII

And thou, my song, I send thee forth,  
 Where harsher songs of mine have flown;  
 Go, find a place at home and hearth  
 Where'er thy singer's name is known; 220  
 Revive for him the kindly thought  
 Of friends; and they who love him not,  
 Touched by some strain of thine, perchance  
 may take  
 The hand he proffers all, and thank him for  
 thy sake.

## SKIPPER IRESON'S RIDE

First published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, December, 1857, this poem was collected into *Home Ballads and Poems* (1860) and reappeared in *Ballads of New England* (1870) and *Favorite Poems* (1877). In the collected editions it was part of "Home Ballads" until 1888-89 and 1892, when it became part of "Narrative and Legendary Poems" and the following introductory note was added:

"In the valuable and carefully prepared *History of Marblehead*, published in 1879 by Samuel Roads, Jr., it is stated that the crew of Captain Ireson, rather than himself, were responsible for the abandonment of the disabled vessel. To screen themselves they charged their captain with the crime. In view of this the writer of the ballad addressed the following letters to the historian:—

"OAK KNOLL, DANVERS, 5 mo. 18, 1880.

"MY DEAR FRIEND: I heartily thank thee for a copy of thy *History of Marblehead*. I have read it with great interest and think good use has been made of the abundant material. No town in Essex County has a record more honorable than Marblehead; no one has done more to develop the industrial interests of our New England seaboard, and certainly none have given such evidences of self

179. *Arcadian vales*—In pastoral poetry Arcadia is supposed to be a valley inhabited by happy shepherds.

sacrificing patriotism. I am glad the story of it has been told, and told so well. I have now no doubt that thy version of Skipper Ireson's ride is the correct one. My verse was founded solely on the fragment of rhyme which I heard from one of my early schoolmates, a native of Marblehead.

"I supposed the story to which it referred dated back at least a century. I know nothing of the participators, and the narrative of the ballad was pure fancy. I am glad for the sake of truth and justice that the real facts are given in thy book. I certainly would not knowingly do injustice to any one, dead or living.

"I am very truly thy friend,  
"JOHN G. WHITTIER."

Of all the rides since the birth of time,  
Told in story or sung in rhyme,—

On Apuleius's Golden Ass,  
Or one-eyed Calender's horse of brass,  
Witch astride of a human back,  
Islam's prophet on Al-Borák,—  
The strangest ride that ever was sped  
Was Ireson's, out from Marblehead!

Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,  
Tarred and feathered and carried in a  
cart  
By the women of Marblehead!

Body of turkey, head of owl,  
Wings a-droop like a rained-on fowl,  
Feathered and ruffled in every part,  
Skipper Ireson stood in the cart.  
Scores of women, old and young,  
Strong of muscle, and glib of tongue,  
Pushed and pulled up the rocky lane,  
Shouting and singing the shrill refrain:  
"Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,  
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt  
By the women o' Morble'ead!"

Wrinkled scolds with hands on hips,  
Girls in bloom of cheek and lips,

Wild-eyed, free-limbed, such as chase  
Bacchus round some antique vase,  
Brief of skirt, with ankles bare,  
Loose of kerchief and loose of hair,  
With conch-shells blowing and fish-horns'  
twang,

Over and over the Maenads sang:  
"Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,  
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt  
By the women o' Morble'ead!"

Small pity for him!—He sailed away  
From a leaking ship in Chaleur Bay,—  
Sailed away from a sinking wreck,  
With his own town's-people on her deck!  
"Lay by! lay by!" they called to him.  
Back he answered, "Sink or swim!  
Brag of your catch of fish again!"  
And off he sailed through the fog and rain!  
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,  
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart  
By the women of Marblehead!

5 Fathoms deep in dark Chaleur  
That wreck shall lie forevermore.  
Mother and sister, wife and maid,  
Looked from the rocks of Marblehead  
Over the moaning and rainy sea,—  
Looked for the coming that might not be!  
What did the winds and the sea-birds say  
Of the cruel captain who sailed away—?  
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,  
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart  
By the women of Marblehead!

15 Through the street, on either side,  
Up flew windows, doors swung wide;  
Sharp-tongued spinsters, old wives gray,  
Treble lent the fish-horn's bray.  
Sea-worn grandsires, cripple-bound,  
60 Hulks of old sailors run aground,  
Shook head, and fist, and hat, and cane,  
And cracked with curses the hoarse refrain:  
"Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,  
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt  
By the women o' Morble'ead!"

3. **Apuleius's**—The *Golden Ass* of Apuleius (second century A.D.), also known as *The Metamorphosis*, tells the story of a man transformed by magic into an ass. 4. **Calender's**—the "Story of the Third Calender" in the Arabian Nights. 6. **Al-Borák**—According to legend, Mohammed was carried into the seventh heaven by the angel Gabriel, mounted on the back of a white animal with two wings, known as Al Borák. 26. **Bacchus**—Bacchus is a frequent subject on Greek vases, and is often shown accompanied by Bacchantes or Maenads, female devotees of the god. 35. **Chaleur Bay**—inlet of the Gulf of St. Lawrence in Canada.

Sweetly along the Salem road  
 Bloom of orchard and lilac showed.  
 Little the wicked skipper knew  
 Of the fields so green and the sky so blue. 70  
 Riding there in his sorry trim,  
 Like an Indian idol glum and grim,  
 Scarcely he seemed the sound to hear  
 Of voices shouting, far and near:

"Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd  
 horrt, 75  
 Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt  
 By the women o' Morble'ead!"

"Hear me, neighbors!" at last he cried,—  
 "What to me is this noisy ride?  
 What is the shame that clothes the skin 80  
 To the nameless horror that lives within?  
 Waking or sleeping, I see a wreck,  
 And hear a cry from a reeling deck!  
 Hate me and curse me,—I only dread  
 The hand of God and the face of the  
 dead!" 85  
 Said old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,  
 Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart  
 By the women of Marblehead!

Then the wife of the skipper lost at sea  
 Said, "God has touched him! why should  
 we!" 90

Said an old wife mourning her only son,  
 "Cut the rogue's tether and let him run!"  
 So with soft relentings and rude excuse,  
 Half scorn, half pity, they cut him loose,  
 And gave him a cloak to hide him in, 95  
 And left him alone with his shame and sin.

Poor Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,  
 Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart  
 By the women of Marblehead!

### TELLING THE BEES

This poem was first collected in *Home Ballads and Poems* (1860), where it is preceded by this note:

"A remarkable custom, brought from the Old Country, formerly prevailed in the rural districts of New England. On the death of a member of the family, the bees were at once informed of the event, and their hives dressed

in mourning. This ceremonial was supposed to be necessary to prevent the swarms from leaving their hives and seeking a new home."

The poem was republished in *Favorite Poems* (1877) without the note, which appears, however, in all the collected editions. In 1888-89 and 1892 the poem is classed with the "Narrative and Legendary Poems."

Here is the place; right over the hill  
 Runs the path I took;  
 You can see the gap in the old wall still,  
 And the stepping-stones in the shallow  
 brook.

There is the house, with the gate red-  
 barred, 5  
 And the poplars tall;  
 And the barn's brown length, and the cattle-  
 yard,  
 And the white horns tossing above the  
 wall.

There are the beehives ranged in the sun;  
 And down by the brink 10  
 Of the brook are her poor flowers, weed-  
 o'errun,  
 Pansy and daffodil, rose and pink.

A year has gone, as the tortoise goes,  
 Heavy and slow;  
 And the same rose blows, and the same sun  
 glows, 15  
 And the same brook sings of a year ago.

There's the same sweet clover-smell in the  
 breeze;  
 And the June sun warm  
 Tangles his wings of fire in the trees,  
 Setting, as then, over Fernside farm. 20

I mind me how with a lover's care  
 From my Sunday coat  
 I brushed off the burrs, and smoothed my  
 hair,  
 And cooled at the brookside my brow and  
 throat.

Since we parted, a month had passed,— 25  
 To love, a year;

Down through the beeches I looked at last  
On the little red gate and the well-sweep  
near.

I can see it all now,—the slantwise rain  
Of light through the leaves, 30  
The sundown's blaze on her window-pane,  
The bloom of her roses under the eaves.

Just the same as a month before,—  
The house and the trees,  
The barn's brown gable, the vine by the  
door,— 35  
Nothing changed but the hives of bees.

Before them, under the garden wall,  
Forward and back,  
Went drearily singing the chore-girl small,  
Drapping each hive with a shred of black. 40

Trembling, I listened: the summer sun  
Had the chill of snow;  
For I knew she was telling the bees of one  
Gone on the journey we all must go!

Then I said to myself, "My Mary weeps 45  
For the dead to-day:  
Haply her blind old grandsire sleeps  
The fret and the pain of his age away."

But her dog whined low; on the doorway  
sill,  
With his cane to his chin, 50  
The old man sat; and the chore-girl still  
Sung to the bees stealing out and in.

And the song she was singing ever since  
In my ear sounds on:—  
"Stay at home, pretty bees, fly not hence! 55  
Mistress Mary is dead and gone!"

### MY PLAYMATE

The history of this poem is like that of  
the preceding. The scenery is that of Whit-  
tier's boyish recollections.

The pines were dark on Ramoth hill,  
Their song was soft and low;

The blossoms in the sweet May wind  
Were falling like the snow.

The blossoms drifted at our feet, 5  
The orchard birds sang clear;  
The sweetest and the saddest day  
It seemed of all the year.

For, more to me than birds or flowers, 10  
My playmate left her home,  
And took with her the laughing spring,  
The music and the bloom.

She kissed the lips of kith and kin,  
She laid her hand in mine:  
What more could ask the bashful boy 15  
Who fed her father's kine?

She left us in the bloom of May:  
The constant years told o'er  
Their seasons with as sweet May morns, 20  
But she came back no more.

I walk, with noiseless feet, the round  
Of uneventful years;  
Still o'er and o'er I sow the spring  
And reap the autumn ears.

She lives where all the golden year 25  
Her summer roses blow;  
The dusky children of the sun  
Before her come and go.

There haply with her jewelled hands 30  
She smooths her silken gown,—  
No more the homespun lap wherein  
I shook the walnuts down.

The wild grapes wait us by the brook,  
The brown nuts on the hill,  
And still the May-day flowers make sweet 35  
The woods of Follymill.

The lilies blossom in the pond,  
The bird builds in the tree,  
The dark pines sing on Ramoth hill 40  
The slow song of the sea.

I wonder if she thinks of them,  
And how the old time seems,—  
If ever the pines of Ramoth wood  
Are sounding in her dreams.

I see her face, I hear her voice;  
Does she remember mine?  
And what to her is now the boy  
Who fed her father's kine?

What cares she that the orioles build  
For other eyes than ours,—  
That other hands with nuts are filled,  
And other laps with flowers?

O playmate in the golden time!  
Our mossy seat is green,  
Its fringing violets blossom yet,  
The old trees o'er it lean.

The winds so sweet with birch and fern  
A sweeter memory blow;  
And there in spring the veeries sing  
The song of long ago.

And still the pines of Ramoth wood  
Are moaning like the sea,—  
The moaning of the sea of change  
Between myself and thee!

### THE WAITING

Gathered into *In War Time and Other Poems* (1863) under "Occasional Poems." In 1888-89 and 1892 it became part of "Poems Subjective and Reminiscent."

I wait and watch: before my eyes  
Methinks the night grows thin and gray;  
I wait and watch the eastern skies  
To see the golden spears uprise  
Beneath the oriflamme of day!

Like one whose limbs are bound in trance  
I hear the day-sounds swell and grow,  
And see across the twilight glance,  
Troop after troop, in swift advance,  
The shining ones with plumes of snow! 10

I know the errand of their feet,  
I know what mighty work is theirs;  
I can but lift up hands unmeet  
The threshing-floors of God to beat,  
And speed them with unworthy prayers. 15

59. *veeries*—*vircoos*.

45 I will not dream in vain despair  
The steps of progress wait for me:  
The puny leverage of a hair  
The planet's impulse well may spare,  
A drop of dew the tided sea. 20

50 The loss, if loss there be, is mine,  
And yet not mine if understood;  
For one shall grasp and one resign,  
One drink life's rue, and one its wine,  
And God shall make the balance good. 25

55 Oh power to do! Oh baffled will!  
Oh prayer and action! ye are one.  
Who may not strive, may yet fulfil  
The harder task of standing still,  
And good but wished with God is done! 30

### LAUS DEO

First published in the *Independent*, February 9, 1865, this poem was included in *National Lyrics* (1865) with the subtitle: "On hearing the bells ring for the constitutional amendment abolishing slavery in the United States." It reappeared in the *Tent on the Beach* volume (1867) under "National Lyrics," and retained its place in that section until 1888-89 and 1892, when it was transferred to "Anti-Slavery Poems," and the subtitle was replaced by the following note:

"On hearing the bells ring on the passage of the constitutional amendment abolishing slavery. The resolution was adopted by Congress, January 31, 1865. The ratification by the requisite number of States was announced December 18, 1865."

The title—"Praise be to God"—is from the Latin Bible (Vulgate). The poem is steeped in biblical phraseology.

It is done!  
Clang of bell and roar of gun  
Send the tidings up and down.  
How the belfries rock and reel!  
How the great guns, peal on peal,  
Fling the joy from town to town! 5

Ring, O bells!  
 Every stroke exulting tells  
 Of the burial hour of crime.  
 Loud and long, that all may hear,  
 Ring for every listening ear  
 Of Eternity and Time!

Let us kneel:  
 God's own voice is in that peal,  
 And this spot is holy ground.  
 Lord, forgive us! What are we,  
 That our eyes this glory see,  
 That our ears have heard this sound!

For the Lord  
 On the whirlwind is abroad;  
 In the earthquake He has spoken;  
 He has smitten with His thunder  
 The iron walls asunder,  
 And the gates of brass are broken!

Loud and long  
 Lift the old exulting song;  
 Sing with Miriam by the sea,  
 He has cast the mighty down;  
 Horse and rider sink and drown;  
 'He hath triumphed gloriously!'

Did we dare,  
 In our agony of prayer,  
 Ask for more than He has done?  
 When was ever his right hand  
 Over any time or land  
 Stretched as now beneath the sun?

How they pale,  
 Ancient myth and song and tale,  
 In this wonder of our days,  
 When the cruel rod of war  
 Blossoms white with righteous law,  
 And the wrath of man is praise!

Blotted out!  
 All within and all about  
 Shall a fresher life begin;  
 Freer breathe the universe  
 As it rolls its heavy curse  
 On the dead and buried sin!

It is done!  
 In the circuit of the sun  
 Shall the sound thereof go forth.  
 It shall bid the sad rejoice,  
 It shall give the dumb a voice,  
 It shall belt with joy the earth!

Ring and swing,  
 Bells of joy! On morning's wing  
 Sound the song of praise abroad!  
 With a sound of broken chains  
 Tell the nations that He reigns,  
 Who alone is Lord and God!

## SNOW-BOUND

### A WINTER IDYL

TO THE MEMORY OF THE HOUSEHOLD IT DESCRIBES THIS POEM IS DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR

First published in booklet form in 1866; and in 1888-89 and 1892 brigaded with "Poems Subjective and Reminiscent," and prefaced by the following note:

"The inmates of the family at the Whittier homestead who are referred to in the poem were my father, mother, my brother and two sisters, and my uncle and aunt both unmarried. In addition, there was the district school-master who boarded with us. The 'not unfeared, half-welcome guest' was Harriet Livermore, daughter of Judge Livermore, of New Hampshire, a young woman of fine natural ability, enthusiastic, eccentric, with slight control over her violent temper, which sometimes made her religious profession doubtful. She was equally ready to exhort in school-house prayer-meetings and dance in a Washington ball-room, while her father was a member of Congress. She early embraced the doctrine of the Second Advent, and felt it her duty to proclaim the Lord's speedy coming. With this message she crossed the Atlantic and spent the greater part of a long life in travelling over Europe and Asia. She lived some time with Lady Hester Stan-

hope, a woman as fantastic and mentally strained as herself, on the slope of Mt. Lebanon, but finally quarrelled with her in regard to two white horses with red marks on their backs which suggested the idea of saddles, on which her titled hostess expected to ride into Jerusalem with the Lord. A friend of mine found her, when quite an old woman, wandering in Syria with a tribe of Arabs, who with the Oriental notion that madness is inspiration, accepted her as their prophetess and leader. At the time referred to in *Snow-Bound* she was boarding at the Rocks Village about two miles from us.

"In my boyhood, in our lonely farm-house, we had scanty sources of information; few books and only a small weekly newspaper. Our only annual was the Almanac. Under such circumstances story-telling was a necessary resource in the long winter evenings. My father when a young man had traversed the wilderness to Canada, and could tell us of his adventures with Indians and wild beasts, and of his sojourn in the French villages. My uncle was ready with his record of hunting and fishing and, it must be confessed, with stories which he at least half believed, of witchcraft and apparitions. My mother, who was born in the Indian-haunted region of Somersworth, New Hampshire, between Dover and Portsmouth, told us of the inroads of the savages, and the narrow escape of her ancestors. She described strange people who lived on the Piscataqua and Cocheco, among whom was Bantam the sorcerer. I have in my possession the wizard's 'conjuring book,' which he solemnly opened when consulted. It is a copy of Cornelius Agrippa's *Magic* printed in 1651, dedicated to Dr. Robert Child, who, like Michael Scott, had learned

'the art of glammorie  
In Padua beyond the sea,'

and who is famous in the annals of Massachusetts, where he was at one time a resident, as the first man who dared petition the General Court for liberty of conscience. The full

title of the book is *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, by Henry Cornelius Agrippa, Knight, Doctor of both Laws, Counsellor to Caesar's Sacred Majesty and Judge of the Prerogative Court."

"As the Spirits of Darkness be stronger in the dark, so good Spirits which be Angels of Light, are augmented not only by the Divine light of the Sun, but also by our common VVood Fire: and as the Celestial Fire drives away dark spirits, so also this our Fire of VVood doth the same." COR. AGRIPPA, *Occult Philosophy*, Book I. ch. v.

"Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,  
Arrives the snow; and, driving o'er the fields,  
Seems nowhere to alight; the whited air  
Hides hills and woods, the river and the heaven,  
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.  
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet  
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit  
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed  
In a tumultuous privacy of storm."

EMERSON, *The Snow-Storm*.

The sun that brief December day  
Rose cheerless over hills of gray,  
And, darkly circled, gave at noon  
A sadder light than waning moon.  
Slow tracing down the thickening sky      5  
Its mute and ominous prophecy,  
A portent seeming less than threat,  
It sank from sight before it set.  
A chill no coat, however stout,  
Of homespun stuff could quite shut out, 10  
A hard, dull bitterness of cold,  
That checked, mid-vein, the circling race  
Of life-blood in the sharpened face,  
The coming of the snow-storm told.  
The wind blew east; we heard the roar      15  
Of Ocean on his wintry shore,  
And felt the strong pulse throbbing there  
Beat with low rhythm our inland air.

Meanwhile we did our nightly chores,—  
Brought in the wood from out of doors, 20  
Littered the stalls, and from the mows  
Raked down the herd's-grass for the cows:  
Heard the horse whinnying for his corn;  
And, sharply clashing horn on horn,  
Impatient down the stanchion rows      25  
The cattle shake their walnut bows;

22. herd's-grass—now known as timothy. 25-26. stanchion . . . bows—A stanchion is a bow (here made of walnut) fastened over the neck of a cow and made fast to the sides of the stall.

While, peering from his early perch  
 Upon the scaffold's pole of birch  
 The cock his crested helmet bent  
 And down his querulous challenge sent. 30

Unwarmed by any sunset light  
 The gray day darkened into night,  
 A night made hoary with the swarm  
 And whirl-dance of the blinding storm,  
 As zigzag, wavering to and fro 35  
 Crossed and recrossed the winged snow:  
 And ere the early bedtime came  
 The white drift piled the window-frame,  
 And through the glass the clothes-line posts  
 Looked in like tall and sheeted ghosts. 40

So all night long the storm roared on:  
 The morning broke without a sun;  
 In tiny spherule traced with lines  
 Of Nature's geometric signs,  
 In starry flake, and pellicle 45  
 All day the hoary meteor fell;  
 And, when the second morning shone,  
 We looked upon a world unknown,  
 On nothing we could call our own.  
 Around the glistening wonder bent 50  
 The blue walls of the firmament,  
 No cloud above, no earth below,—  
 A universe of sky and snow!  
 The old familiar sights of ours  
 Took marvelous shapes; strange domes and  
 towers 55  
 Rose up where sty or corn-crib stood,  
 Or garden-wall, or belt of wood;  
 A smooth white mound the brush-pile  
 showed,  
 A fenceless drift what once was road;  
 The bridle-post an old man sat 60  
 With loose-flung coat and high cocked hat;  
 The well-curb had a Chinese roof;  
 And even the long sweep, high aloof,  
 In its slant splendor, seemed to tell  
 Of Pisa's leaning miracle. 65

A prompt, decisive man, no breath  
 Our father wasted: "Boys, a path!"  
 Well pleased (for when did farmer boy  
 Count such a summons less than joy?)

Our buskins on our feet we drew; 70  
 With mittened hands, and caps drawn low,  
 To guard our necks and ears from snow,  
 We cut the solid whiteness through.  
 And, where the drift was deepest, made  
 A tunnel walled and overlaid 75  
 With dazzling crystal: we had read  
 Of rare Aladdin's wondrous cave,  
 And to our own his name we gave,  
 With many a wish the luck were ours  
 To test his lamp's supernal powers. 80  
 We reached the barn with merry din,  
 And roused the prisoned brutes within.  
 The old horse thrust his long head out,  
 And grave with wonder gazed about;  
 The cock his lusty greeting said, 85  
 And forth his speckled harem led;  
 The oxen lashed their tails, and hooked,  
 And mild reproach of hunger looked;  
 The horned patriarch of the sheep,  
 Like Egypt's Amun roused from sleep, 90  
 Shook his sage head with gesture mute,  
 And emphasized with stamp of foot.

All day the gusty north-wind bore  
 The loosening drift its breath before;  
 Low circling round its southern zone, 95  
 The sun through dazzling snow-mist shone.  
 No church-bell lent its Christian tone  
 To the savage air, no social smoke  
 Curled over woods of snow-hung oak.  
 A solitude made more intense 100  
 By dreary-voiced elements,  
 The shrieking of the mindless wind,  
 The moaning tree-boughs swaying blind,  
 And on the glass the unmeaning beat  
 Of ghostly finger-tips of sleet. 105  
 Beyond the circle of our hearth  
 No welcome sound of toil or mirth  
 Unbound the spell, and testified  
 Of human life and thought outside.  
 We minded that the sharpest ear 110  
 The buried brooklet could not hear,  
 The music of whose liquid lip  
 Had been to us companionship,  
 And, in our lonely life, had grown  
 To have an almost human tone. 115

45. pellicle—thin film. 65. Pisa's . . . miracle—the leaning tower of Pisa. 70. buskins  
 —boots; high shoes. 90. Amun—The god Amun (Amon) in ancient Egypt had the head of a ram.



As night drew on, and, from the crest  
 Of wooded knolls that ridged the west,  
 The sun, a snow-blown traveler, sank  
 From sight beneath the smothering bank,  
 We piled, with care, our nightly stack 120  
 Of wood against the chimney-back,—  
 The oaken log, green, huge, and thick,  
 And on its top the stout back-stick;  
 The knotty forestick laid apart,  
 And filled between with curious art 125  
 The ragged brush; then, hovering near,  
 We watched the first red blaze appear,  
 Heard the sharp crackle, caught the gleam  
 On whitewashed wall and sagging beam,  
 Until the old, rude-furnished room 130  
 Burst, flower-like, into rosy bloom;  
 While radiant with a mimic flame  
 Outside the sparkling drift became,  
 And through the bare-boughed lilac-tree  
 Our own warm hearth seemed blazing free.  
 The crane and pendent trammels showed, 136  
 The Turks' heads on the andirons glowed;  
 While childish fancy, prompt to tell  
 The meaning of the miracle,  
 Whispered the old rhyme: "*Under the*  
*tree,*" 140  
*When fire outdoors burns merrily,*  
*There the witches are making tea."*

The moon above the eastern wood  
 Shone at its full; the hill-range stood  
 Transfigured in the silver flood, 145  
 Its blown snows flashing cold and keen,  
 Dead white, save where some sharp ravine  
 Took shadow, or the sombre green  
 Of hemlocks turned to pitchy black  
 Against the whiteness at their back. 150  
 For such a world and such a night  
 Most fitting that unwarming light,  
 Which only seemed where'er it fell  
 To make the coldness visible.

Shut in from all the world without, 155  
 We sat the clean-winged hearth about,  
 Content to let the north-wind roar  
 In baffled rage at pane and door,  
 While the red logs before us beat  
 The frost-line back with tropic heat; 160

136. trammels—iron hooks for holding vessels over the fire. 160. frost-line—that is, the fire gradually warmed more and more of the room. On cold nights all of the room not warmed by the fire would be intensely cold. 183. brother—Matthew Franklin Whittier (1812-1883). 207. mournful marbles—gravestones.

And ever, when a louder blast  
 Shook beam and rafter as it passed,  
 The merrier up its roaring draught  
 The great throat of the chimney laughed,  
 The house-dog on his paws outspread 165  
 Laid to the fire his drowsy head,  
 The cat's dark silhouette on the wall  
 A couchant tiger's seemed to fall;  
 And, for the winter fireside meet,  
 Between the andirons' straddling feet, 170  
 The mug of cider simmered slow,  
 The apples sputtered in a row,  
 And, close at hand, the basket stood  
 With nuts from brown October's wood.

What matter how the night behaved? 175  
 What matter how the north-wind raved?  
 Blow high, blow low, not all its snow  
 Could quench our hearth-fire's ruddy glow.  
 O Time and Change!—with hair as gray  
 As was my sire's that winter day, 180  
 How strange it seems, with so much gone  
 Of life and love, to still live on!  
 Ah, brother! only I and thou  
 Are left of all that circle now,—  
 The dear home faces whereupon 185  
 That fitful firelight paled and shone.  
 Henceforward, listen as we will,  
 The voices of that hearth are still;  
 Look where we may, the wide earth o'er,  
 Those lighted faces smile no more. 190  
 We tread the paths their feet have worn,  
 We sit beneath their orchard trees,  
 We hear, like them, the hum of bees  
 And rustle of the bladed corn;  
 We turn the pages that they read, 195  
 Their written words we linger o'er,  
 But in the sun they cast no shade,  
 No voice is heard, no sign is made,  
 No step is on the conscious floor!  
 Yet Love will dream, and Faith will trust, 200  
 (Since He who knows our need is just)  
 That somehow, somewhere, meet we must.  
 Alas for him who never sees  
 The stars shine through his cypress-trees!  
 Who, hopeless, lays his dead away, 205  
 Nor looks to see the breaking day  
 Across the mournful marbles play!

Who hath not learned, in hours of faith,  
The truth to flesh and sense unknown,  
That Life is ever lord of Death, 210  
And Love can never lose its own!

We sped the time with stories old,  
Wrought puzzles out, and riddles told,  
Or stammered from our school-book lore  
"The chief of Gambia's golden shore." 215  
How often since, when all the land  
Was clay in Slavery's shaping hand,  
As if a far-blown trumpet stirred  
The languorous sin-sick air, I heard:  
"Does not the voice of reason cry, 220  
Claim the first right which Nature gave,  
From the red scourge of bondage fly,  
Nor deign to live a burdened slave!"

Our father rode again his ride  
On Memphremagog's wooded side; 225  
Sat down again to moose and samp  
In trapper's hut and Indian camp;  
Lived o'er the old idyllic ease  
Beneath St. François' hemlock-trees;  
Again for him the moonlight shone 230  
On Norman cap and bodiced zone;

Again he heard the violin play  
Which led the village dance away,  
And mingled in its merry whirl  
The grandam and the laughing girl. 235  
Or, nearer home, our steps he led  
Where Salisbury's level marshes spread  
Mile-wide as flies the laden bee;  
Where merry mowers, hale and strong,  
Swept, scythe on scythe, their swaths along  
The low green prairies of the sea. 241  
We shared the fishing off Boar's Head,  
And round the rocky Isles of Shoals  
The hake-broil on the drift-wood coals;  
The chowder on the sand-beach made, 245  
Dipped by the hungry, steaming hot,  
With spoons of clam-shell from the pot.  
We heard the tales of witchcraft old,  
And dream and sign and marvel told  
To sleepy listeners as they lay 250  
Stretched idly on the salted hay,  
Adrift along the winding shores,  
When favoring breezes deigned to blow  
The square sail of the gundalow,  
And idle lay the useless oars. 255

215. *The African Chief* was the title of a poem by Mrs. Sarah Wentworth Morton, wife of the Hon. Perez Morton, a former attorney-general of Massachusetts. Mrs. Morton's *nom de plume* was *Philenia*. The school book in which *The African Chief* was printed was Caleb Bingham's *The American Preceptor*, and the poem contained fifteen stanzas, of which the first four were as follows:

"See how the black ship cleaves the main  
High-bounding o'er the violet wave,  
Remurmuring with the groans of pain,  
Deep freighted with the princely slave.

"Did all the gods of Afric sleep,  
Forgetful of their guardian love,  
When the white traitors of the deep  
Betrayed him in the palmy grove.

"A chief of Gambia's golden shore,  
Whose arm the band of warriors led,  
Perhaps the lord of boundless power,  
By whom the foodless poor were fed.

"Does not the voice of reason cry,  
'Claim the first right which nature gave;  
From the red scourge of bondage fly,  
Nor deign to live a burdened slave.'"

(Whittier's note)

224. *father*—John Whittier (1760-1830). 225. *Memphremagog's*—a lake in Vermont and Canada. 226. *samp*—mush made of Indian corn. 229. *St. François'*—river and village north of Lake Memphremagog, in Canada. 231. *zone*—waist. 237. *Salisbury's*—town in north-eastern Massachusetts near the Whittier farm. 242. *Boar's Head*—Between Salisbury and Portsmouth on the New England coast there are two promontories, Big and Little Boar's Head. 243. *Isles of Shoals*—off the coast near the Boar's Head. 244. *hake*—a kind of fish. 254. *gundalow*—flat-bottomed boat.

Our mother, while she turned her wheel  
 Or run the new-knit stocking-heel,  
 Told how the Indian hordes came down  
 At midnight on Cocheco town,  
 And how her own great-uncle bore 260  
 His cruel scalp-mark to fourscore.  
 Recalling, in her fitting phrase,  
     So rich and picturesque and free  
     (The common unrhymed poetry  
 Of simple life and country ways), 265  
 The story of her early days,—  
 She made us welcome to her home;  
 Old hearths grew wide to give us room;  
 We stole with her a frightened look  
 At the gray wizard's conjuring-book, 270  
 The fame whereof went far and wide  
 Through all the simple country-side;  
 We heard the hawks at twilight play,  
 The boat-horn on Piscataqua,  
 The loon's weird laughter far away; 275  
 We fished her little trout-brook, knew  
 What flowers in wood and meadow grew,  
 What sunny hillsides autumn-brown  
 She climbed to shake the ripe nuts down,  
 Saw where in sheltered cove and bay 280  
 The duck's black squadron anchored lay,  
 And heard the wild-geese calling loud  
 Beneath the gray November cloud.

Then, haply, with a look more grave,  
 And soberer tone, some tale she gave 285  
 From painful Sewel's ancient tome,  
 Beloved in every Quaker home,

Of faith fire-winged by martyrdom,  
 Or Chalkley's Journal, old and quaint,—  
 Gentlest of skippers, rare sea-saint!— 290  
 Who, when the dreary calms prevailed,  
 And water-butt and bread-cask failed,  
 And cruel, hungry eyes pursued  
 His portly presence, mad for food  
 With dark hints muttered under breath 295  
 Of casting lots for life or death,  
 Offered, if Heaven withheld supplies,  
 To be himself the sacrifice.  
 Then, suddenly, as if to save  
 The good man from his living grave, 300  
 A ripple on the water grew,  
 A school of porpoise flashed in view.  
 "Take, eat," he said, "and be content;  
 These fishes in my stead are sent  
 By Him who gave the tangled ram 305  
 To spare the child of Abraham."

Our uncle, innocent of books,  
 Was rich in lore of fields and brooks,  
 The ancient teachers never dumb  
 Of Nature's unhoused lyceum. 310  
 In moons and tides and weather wise,  
 He read the clouds as prophecies,  
 And foul or fair could well divine,  
 By many an occult hint and sign,  
 Holding the cunning-warded keys 315  
 To all the woodcraft mysteries;  
 Himself to Nature's heart so near  
 That all her voices in his ear  
 Of beast or bird had meanings clear,

256. **mother**—Abigail Hussey Whittier (1781-1857). 259. **Cocheco**—town near Dover, New Hampshire, raided by the Indians in 1689. 270. **conjuring-book**—See introductory note to *Snow-Boat*. 274. **Piscataqua**—river principally in Maine and New Hampshire. 286. **Sewel's . . . tome**—*History of the Quakers* (1722) by William Sewel. 289. **Chalkley's Journal**—by Thomas Chalkley (1675-1741), published 1747. "Chalkley's own narrative of this incident, as given in his *Journal* is as follows: 'To stop their murmuring, I told them they should not need to cast lots, which was usual in such cases, which of us should die first, for I would freely offer up my life to do them good. One said, "God bless you! I will not eat any of you." Another said, "He would die before he would eat any of me;" and so said several. I can truly say, on that occasion, at that time, my life was not dear to me, and that I was serious and ingenuous in my proposition: and as I was leaning over the side of the vessel, thoughtfully considering my proposal to the company, and looking in my mind to Him that made me, a very large dolphin came up towards the top or surface of the water, and looked me in the face; and I called the people to put a hook into the sea, and take him, for here is one come to redeem me (I said to them). And they put a hook into the sea, and the fish readily took it, and they caught him. He was longer than myself. I think he was about six feet long, and the largest that ever I saw. This plainly showed us that we ought not to distrust the providence of the Almighty. The people were quieted by this act of Providence, and murmured no more. We caught enough to eat plentifully of, till we got into the capes of Delaware.'" (Whittier's note) 303. **"Take, eat"**—*Cf.* Matt. 26:26. 305. **ram**—*Cf.* Gen. 22:13. 307. **uncle**—Moses Whittier (died 1824). 310. **lyceum**—The lyceum was like the modern Chautauqua. 315. **cunning-warded**—about equivalent to intricately made.

Like Apollonius of old, 320 And homespun warp of circumstance  
 Who knew the tales the sparrows told, A golden woof-thread of romance. 365  
 Or Hermes, who interpreted  
 What the sage cranes of Nilus said; For well she kept her genial mood  
 A simple, guileless, childlike man, And simple faith of maidenhood;  
 Content to live where life began; 325 Before her still a cloud-land lay,  
 Strong only on his native grounds, The mirage loomed across her way;  
 The little world of sights and sounds 370 The morning dew, that dried so soon  
 Whose girdle was the parish bounds, With others, glistened at her noon;  
 Whereof his fondly partial pride Through years of toil and soil and care,  
 The common features magnified, 330 From glossy tress to thin gray hair,  
 As Surrey hills to mountains grew All unprofaned she held apart  
 In White of Selborne's loving view,— The virgin fancies of the heart. 375  
 He told how teal and loon he shot, Be shame to him of woman born  
 And how the eagle's eggs he got, Who had for such but thought of scorn.  
 The feats on pond and river done, 335 There, too, our elder sister plied  
 The prodigies of rod and gun; Her evening task the stand beside;  
 Till, warming with the tales he told, A full, rich nature, free to trust, 380  
 Forgotten was the outside cold, Truthful and almost sternly just,  
 The bitter wind unheeded blew, Impulsive, earnest, prompt to act,  
 From ripening corn the pigeons flew, 340 And make her generous thought a fact,  
 The partridge drummed i' the wood, the mink Keeping with many a light disguise  
 Went fishing down the river-brink. The secret of self-sacrifice. 385  
 In fields with bean or clover gay, O heart sore-tried! thou hast the best  
 The woodchuck, like a hermit gray, That Heaven itself could give thee,—rest,  
 Peered from the doorway of his cell; 345 Rest from all bitter thoughts and things!  
 The muskrat plied the mason's trade, How many a poor one's blessing went  
 And tier by tier his mud-walls laid; With thee beneath the low green tent 390  
 And from the shagbark overhead Whose curtain never outward swings!  
 The grizzled squirrel dropped his shell. As one who held herself a part  
 Of all she saw, and let her heart  
 Next, the dear aunt, whose smile of cheer Against the household bosom lean,  
 And voice in dreams I see and hear,— 351 Upon the motley-braided mat 395  
 The sweetest woman ever Fate  
 Perverse denied a household mate, Our youngest and our dearest sat,  
 Who, lonely, homeless, not the less Lifting her large, sweet, asking eyes,  
 Found peace in love's unselfishness, 355 Now bathed within the unfading green  
 And welcome wheresoe'er she went, And holy peace of Paradise.  
 A calm and gracious element, Oh, looking from some heavenly hill, 400  
 Whose presence seemed the sweet income Or from the shade of saintly palms,  
 And womanly atmosphere of home,— Or silver reach of river calms,  
 Called up her girlhood memories, 360 Do those large eyes behold me still?  
 The huskings and the apple-bees, With me one little year ago:—  
 The sleigh-rides and the summer sails, The chill weight of the winter snow 405  
 Weaving through all the poor details For months upon her grave has lain;  
 And now, when summer south-winds blow

320. **Apollonius**—Apollonius of Tyre, Greek mystic of the first century. 322. **Hermes**—Hermes Trismegistus, reputed author of numerous works on Egypt. 323. **Nilus**—the Nile. 331-32. **Surrey** . . . **White**—The reference is to the *Natural History of Selborne* by Gilbert White (1720-1793), the English naturalist. The Surrey in question is in England. 350. **aunt**—Mercy Evans Hussey (died 1846). 378. **sister**—Mary Caldwell Whittier (1806-1860). 396. **youngest**—Elizabeth Hussey Whittier (died 1864).

And brier and harebell bloom again,  
 I tread the pleasant paths we trod,  
 I see the violet-sprinkled sod 411  
 Whereon she leaned, too frail and weak  
 The hillside flowers she loved to seek,  
 Yet following me where'er I went  
 With dark eyes full of love's content.  
 The birds are glad; the brier-rose fills 415  
 The air with sweetness; all the hills  
 Stretch green to June's unclouded sky;  
 But still I wait with ear and eye  
 For something gone which should be nigh,  
 A loss in all familiar things, 420  
 In flower that blooms, and bird that sings.  
 And yet, dear heart! remembering thee,  
 Am I not richer than of old?  
 Safe in thy immortality 424  
 What change can reach the wealth I hold?  
 What chance can mar the pearl and gold  
 Thy love hath left in trust with me?  
 And while in life's late afternoon,  
 Where cool and long the shadows grow,  
 I walk to meet the night that soon 430  
 Shall shape and shadow overflow,  
 I cannot feel that thou art far,  
 Since near at need the angels are;  
 And when the sunset gates unbar,  
 Shall I not see thee waiting stand, 435  
 And, white against the evening star,  
 The welcome of thy beckoning hand?

Brisk wielder of the birch and rule,  
 The master of the district school  
 Held at the fire his favored place; 440  
 Its warm glow lit a laughing face  
 Fresh-hued and fair, where scarce appeared  
 The uncertain prophecy of beard.  
 He teased the mitten-blinded cat,  
 Played cross-pins on my uncle's hat, 445  
 Sang songs, and told us what befalls  
 In classic Dartmouth's college halls.  
 Born the wild Northern hills among,  
 From whence his yeoman father wrung  
 By patient toil subsistence scant, 450  
 Not competence and yet not want,  
 He early gained the power to pay  
 His cheerful, self-reliant way;

Could doff at ease his scholar's gown  
 To peddle wares from town to town 455  
 Or through the long vacation's reach  
 In lonely lowland districts teach,  
 Where all the droll experience found  
 At stranger hearths in boarding round,  
 The moonlit skater's keen delight, 460  
 The sleigh-drive through the frosty night,  
 The rustic party, with its rough  
 Accompaniment of blind-man's-buff,  
 And whirling plate, and forfeits paid,  
 His winter task a pastime made. 465  
 Happy the snow-locked homes wherein  
 He tuned his merry violin,  
 Or played the athlete in the barn,  
 Or held the good dame's winding-yarn,  
 Or mirth-provoking versions told 470  
 Of classic legends rare and old,  
 Wherein the scenes of Greece and Rome  
 Had all the commonplace of home,  
 And little seemed at best the odds  
 'Twixt Yankee peddlers and old gods; 475  
 Where Pindus-born Arachthus took  
 The guise of any grist-mill brook,  
 And dread Olympus at his will  
 Became a huckleberry hill.

A careless boy that night he seemed; 480  
 But at his desk he had the look  
 And air of one who wisely schemed,  
 And hostage from the future took  
 In trained thought and lore of book.  
 Large-brained, clear-eyed,—of such as he  
 Shall Freedom's young apostles be, 486  
 Who, following in War's bloody trail,  
 Shall every lingering wrong assail;  
 All chains from limb and spirit strike,  
 Uplift the black and white alike; 490  
 Scatter before their swift advance  
 The darkness and the ignorance,  
 The pride, the lust, the squalid sloth,  
 Which nurtured Treason's monstrous growth,  
 Made murder pastime, and the hell 495  
 Of prison-torture possible;  
 The cruel lie of caste refute,  
 Old forms remould, and substitute

439. master—George Haskell (1799-1876), a Dartmouth graduate. 445. cross-pins—Also called hattie. The players lay pins on the crown of a hat; and each in turn gives the hat a smart tap. If any two pins after such a tap lie across each other, the player picks them up. 476. Arachthus—river in Greece, rising in the Pindus range.

For Slavery's lash the freeman's will,  
 For blind routine, wise-handed skill; 500  
 A school-house plant on every hill,  
 Stretching in radiate nerve-lines thence  
 The quick wires of intelligence;  
 Till North and South together brought  
 Shall own the same electric thought, 505  
 In peace a common flag salute,  
 And, side by side in labor's free  
 And unresentful rivalry,  
 Harvest the fields wherein they fought.

Another guest that winter night 510  
 Flashed back from lustrous eyes the light.  
 Unmarked by time, and yet not young,  
 The honeyed music of her tongue  
 And words of meekness scarcely told  
 A nature passionate and bold, 515  
 Strong, self-concentred, spurning guide,  
 Its milder features dwarfed beside  
 Her unbent will's majestic pride.  
 She sat among us, at the best,  
 A not unfear'd, half-welcome guest, 520  
 Rebuking with her cultured phrase  
 Our homeliness of words and ways.  
 A certain pard-like, treacherous grace  
 Swayed the lithe limbs and dropped the lash,  
 Lent the white teeth their dazzling flash;  
 And under low brows, black with night, 526  
 Rayed out at times a dangerous light;  
 The sharp heat-lightnings of her face  
 Presaging ill to him whom Fate  
 Condemned to share her love or hate. 530  
 A woman tropical, intense  
 In thought and act, in soul and sense,  
 She blended in a like degree  
 The vixen and the devotee,  
 Revealing with each freak of feint 535  
 The temper of Petruchio's Kate,  
 The raptures of Siena's saint.  
 Her tapering hand and rounded wrist  
 Had facile power to form a fist;  
 The warm, dark languish of her eyes 540  
 Was never safe from wrath's surprise.  
 Brows saintly calm and lips devout  
 Knew every change of scowl and pout;

And the sweet voice had notes more high  
 And shrill for social battle-cry. 545

Since then what old cathedral town  
 Has missed her pilgrim staff and gown,  
 What convent-gate has held its lock  
 Against the challenge of her knock!  
 Through Smyrna's plague-hushed thorough-  
 fares, 550  
 Up sea-set Malta's rocky stairs,  
 Gray olive slopes of hills that hem  
 Thy tombs and shrines, Jerusalem,  
 Or startling on her desert throne  
 The crazy Queen of Lebanon 555  
 With claims fantastic as her own,  
 Her tireless feet have held their way;  
 And still, unrestful, bowed, and gray,  
 She watches under Eastern skies,  
 With hope each day renewed and fresh,  
 The Lord's quick coming in the flesh, 561  
 Whereof she dreams and prophecies!

Where'er her troubled path may be,  
 The Lord's sweet pity with her go!  
 The outward wayward life we see, 565  
 The hidden springs we may not know.  
 Nor is it given us to discern  
 What threads the fatal sisters spun,  
 Through what ancestral years has run  
 The sorrow with the woman born, 570  
 What forged her cruel chain of moods,  
 What set her feet in solitudes,  
 And held the love within her mute,  
 What mingled madness in the blood,  
 A life-long discord and annoy, 575  
 Water of tears with oil of joy,  
 And hid within the folded bud  
 Perversities of flower and fruit.  
 It is not ours to separate  
 The tangled skein of will and fate, 580  
 To show what metes and bounds should  
 stand  
 Upon the soul's debatable land,  
 And between choice and Providence  
 Divide the circle of events;  
 But He who knows our frame is just, 585

510 ff. guest—Harriet Livermore (born 1788). See Whittier's introductory note for the explanation of the allusions. 536. Petruchio's Kate—the hero and heroine of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. 537. Siena's saint—St. Catherine of Siena (1347-1380), a mystic. 555. Queen—"An interesting account of Lady Hester Stanhope may be found in Kinglake's *Eothen*, chapter viii." (Whittier's note)

Merciful and compassionate,  
And full of sweet assurances  
And hope for all the language is,  
That He remembereth we are dust!

At last the great logs, crumbling low, 590  
Sent out a dull and duller glow,  
The bull's-eye watch that hung in view,  
Ticking its weary circuit through,  
Pointed with mutely warning sign  
Its black hand to the hour of nine. 595  
That sign the pleasant circle broke:  
My uncle ceased his pipe to smoke,  
Knocked from its bowl the refuse gray,  
And laid it tenderly away,  
Then roused himself to safely cover 600  
The dull red brands with ashes over.  
And while, with care, our mother laid  
The work aside, her steps she stayed  
One moment, seeking to express  
Her grateful sense of happiness 605  
For food and shelter, warmth and health,  
And love's contentment more than wealth,  
With simple wishes (not the weak,  
Vain prayers which no fulfillment seek,  
But such as warm the generous heart, 610  
O'er-prompt to do with Heaven its part)  
That none might lack, that bitter night,  
For bread and clothing, warmth and light.

Within our beds awhile we heard  
The wind that round the gables roared, 615  
With now and then a ruder shock,  
Which made our very bedsteads rock.  
We heard the loosened clapboards tost,  
The board-nails snapping in the frost;  
And on us, through the unplastered wall,  
Felt the light sifted snow-flakes fall. 621  
But sleep stole on, as sleep will do  
When hearts are light and life is new;  
Faint and more faint the murmurs grew,  
Till in the summer-land of dreams 625  
They softened to the sound of streams,  
Low stir of leaves, and dip of oars,  
And lapsing waves on quiet shores.

Next morn we wakened with the shout  
Of merry voices high and clear; 630  
And saw the teamsters drawing near  
To break the drifted highways out.

Down the long hillside treading slow  
We saw the half-buried oxen go,  
Shaking the snow from heads uptost, 635  
Their straining nostrils white with frost.  
Before our door the straggling train  
Drew up, an added team to gain.  
The elders threshed their hands a-cold,  
Passed, with the cider-mug, their jokes  
From lip to lip; the younger folks 641  
Down the loose snow-banks, wrestling, rolled,  
Then toiled again the cavalcade  
O'er windy hill, through clogged ravine,  
And woodland paths that wound between  
Low drooping pine-boughs winter-weighted.  
From every barn a team afoot, 647  
At every house a new recruit,  
Where, drawn by Nature's subtlest law,  
Haply the watchful young men saw 650  
Sweet doorway pictures of the curls  
And curious eyes of merry girls,  
Lifting their hands in mock defence  
Against the snow-ball's compliments,  
And reading in each missive tost 655  
The charm which Eden never lost.

We heard once more the sleigh-bells' sound;  
And, following where the teamsters led,  
The wise old Doctor went his round,  
Just pausing at our door to say, 660  
In the brief autocratic way  
Of one who, prompt at Duty's call,  
Was free to urge her claim on all,  
That some poor neighbor sick abed  
At night our mother's aid would need. 665  
For, one in generous thought and deed,  
What mattered in the sufferer's sight  
The Quaker matron's inward light,  
The Doctor's mail of Calvin's creed?  
All hearts confess the saints elect 670  
Who, twain in faith, in love agree,  
And melt not in an acid sect  
The Christian pearl of charity!

So days went on: a week had passed  
Since the great world was heard from last.  
The Almanac we studied o'er, 676  
Read and reread our little store  
Of books and pamphlets, scarce a score;  
One harmless novel, mostly hid  
From younger eyes, a book forbid, 680

And poetry, (or good or bad,  
A single book was all we had,)
 Where Ellwood's meek, drab-skirted Muse,

A stranger to the heathen Nine,  
Sang, with a somewhat nasal whine, 685

The wars of David and the Jews.

At last the floundering carrier bore  
The village paper to our door.

Lo! broadening outward as we read,  
To warmer zones the horizon spread; 690

In panoramic length unrolled

We saw the marvel that it told.

Before us passed the painted Creeks,

And daft McGregor on his raids

In Costa Rica's everglades. 695

And up Taygetus winding slow

Rode Ypsilanti's Mainote Greeks,

A Turk's head at each saddle-bow!

Welcome to us its week-old news,

Its corner for the rustic Muse, 700

Its monthly gauge of snow and rain,

Its record, mingling in a breath

The wedding bell and dirge of death;

Jest, anecdote, and love-lorn tale,

The latest culprit sent to jail; 705

Its hue and cry of stolen and lost,

Its vendue sales and goods at cost,

And traffic calling loud for gain.

We felt the stir of hall and street,

The pulse of life that round us beat; 710

The chill embargo of the snow

Was melted in the genial glow;

Wide swung again our ice-locked door,

And all the world was ours once more!

Clasp, Angel of the backward look 715

And folded wings of ashen gray

And voice of echoes far away,

The brazen covers of thy book;

The weird palimpsest old and vast, 720

Wherein thou hid'st the spectral past;

Where, closely mingling, pale and glow

The characters of joy and woe;

The monographs of outlived years,

Or smile-illumed or dim with tears,

Green hills of life that slope to death, 725

And haunts of home, whose vistaed trees

Shade off to mournful cypresses

With the white amaranths underneath.

Even while I look, I can but heed

The restless sands' incessant fall, 730

Importunate hours that hours succeed,

Each clamorous with its own sharp need,

And duty keeping pace with all.

Shut down and clasp the heavy lids;

I hear again the voice that bids 735

The dreamer leave his dream midway

For larger hopes and graver fears:

Life greatens in these later years,

The century's aloë flowers to-day!

Yet, haply, in some lull of life, 740

Some Truce of God which breaks its strife,

The worldling's eyes shall gather dew,

Dreaming in throngful city ways

Of winter joys his boyhood knew;

And dear and early friends—the few 745

Who yet remain—shall pause to view

These Flemish pictures of old days;

Sit with me by the homestead hearth,

And stretch the hands of memory forth

To warm them at the wood-fire's blaze!

And thanks untraced to lips unknown 751

Shall greet me like the odors blown

From unseen meadows newly mown,

Or lilies floating in some pond,

Wood-fringed, the wayside gaze beyond;

The traveler owns the grateful sense 756

Of sweetness near, he knows not whence,

And, pausing, takes with forehead bare

The benediction of the air.

## THE ETERNAL GOODNESS

Gathered into *The Tent on the Beach and Other Poems* (1867) as part of "Occasional Poems," this poem retained its place in that section until 1888-89 and 1892, when it be

683. Ellwood's—Thomas Ellwood (1639-1713), author of *Daiveis* (1712). 693. Creeks—Andrew Jackson defeated the Creeks at Talladega (1813) and Tohopeka (1814). 694. McGregor—"Sir" Gregor McGregor in 1819 tried to establish a colony on the coast of Costa Rica by force of arms. 696. Taygetus—that is, General Ypsilanti was leading a force of Greek insurrectionists from Maina up Mount Taygetus. 707. vendue—public sale; auction. 728. amaranths—imaginary immortal flowers. 730. sands—that is, sand in an hourglass. 739. aloë—symbol of bitterness. 741. Truce of God—state of peace. 747. Flemish pictures—The Flemish school of painting was notable for its loving and homely realism.



came part of "Religious Poems." It is probably Whittier's most eloquent statement of his religious faith.

O Friends! with whom my feet have trod  
The quiet aisles of prayer,  
Glad witness to your zeal for God  
And love of man I bear.

I trace your lines of argument;                   5  
Your logic linked and strong  
I weigh as one who dreads dissent,  
And fears a doubt as wrong.

But still my human hands are weak  
To hold your iron creeds:                   10  
Against the words ye bid me speak  
My heart within me pleads.

Who fathoms the Eternal Thought?  
Who talks of scheme and plan?  
The Lord is God! He needeth not                   15  
The poor device of man.

I walk with bare, hushed feet the ground  
Ye tread with boldness shod;  
I dare not fix with mete and bound  
The love and power of God.                   20

Ye praise his justice; even such  
His pitying love I deem:  
Ye seek a king; I fain would touch  
The robe that hath no seam.

Ye see the curse which overbroods                   25  
A world of pain and loss;  
I hear our Lord's beatitudes  
And prayer upon the cross.

More than your schoolmen teach, within  
Myself, alas! I know:                   30  
Too dark ye cannot paint the sin,  
Too small the merit show.

I bow my forehead to the dust,  
I veil mine eyes for shame,  
And urge, in trembling self-distrust,                   35  
A prayer without a claim.

I see the wrong that round me lies,  
I feel the guilt within;  
I hear, with groan and travail-cries,  
The world confess its sin.                   40

Yet, in the maddening maze of things,  
And tossed by storm and flood,  
To one fixed trust my spirit clings;  
I know that God is good!

Not mine to look where cherubim                   45  
And seraphs may not see,  
But nothing can be good in Him  
Which evil is in me.

The wrong that pains my soul below  
I dare not throne above,                   50  
I know not of his hate,—I know  
His goodness and his love.

I dimly guess from blessings known  
Of greater out of sight,  
And, with the chastened Psalmist, own  
His judgments too are right.                   56

I long for household voices gone,  
For vanished smiles I long,  
But God hath led my dear ones on,  
And He can do no wrong.                   60

I know not what the future hath  
Of marvel or surprise,  
Assured alone that life and death  
His mercy underlies.

And if my heart and flesh are weak                   65  
To bear an untried pain,  
The bruised reed He will not break,  
But strengthen and sustain.

No offering of my own I have,  
Nor works my faith to prove;                   70  
I can but give the gifts He gave,  
And plead his love for love.

And so beside the Silent Sea  
I wait the muffled oar;  
No harm from Him can come to me                   75  
On ocean or on shore.

19. mete and bound—legal term meaning boundary. 27. beatitudes—*Cf.* Matt. 5:3-12.  
28. prayer—*Cf.* Luke 23:34. 55. Psalmist—*Cf.* Psalms 19:9. 67. bruised reed—*Cf.* Isa.  
42:3.

I know not where his islands lift  
 Their fronded palms in air;  
 I only know I cannot drift  
 Beyond his love and care. 80

O brothers! if my faith is vain,  
 If hopes like these betray,  
 Pray for me that my feet may gain  
 The sure and safer way.

And Thou, O Lord! by whom are seen 85  
 Thy creatures as they be,  
 Forgive me if too close I lean  
 My human heart on Thee!

## ABRAHAM DAVENPORT

First collected in *The Tent on the Beach and Other Poems* (1867). It retains this place in 1888-89 and 1892, where it is preceded by the following note:

"The famous Dark Day of New England, May 19, 1780, was a physical puzzle for many years to our ancestors, but its occurrence brought something more than philosophical speculation into the minds of those who passed through it. Abraham Davenport's sturdy protest is a matter of history."

The story may be found in J. W. Barber, *Connecticut Historical Collections*, New Haven, 1836, p. 407.

In the old days (a custom laid aside  
 With breeches and cocked hats) the people  
 sent

Their wisest men to make the public laws.  
 And so, from a brown homestead, where the  
 Sound

Drinks the small tribute of the Mianas, 5  
 Waved over by the woods of Rippowams,  
 And hallowed by pure lives and tranquil  
 deaths,

Stamford sent up to the councils of the State  
 Wisdom and grace in Abraham Davenport.

'Twas on a May-day of the far old year 10  
 Seventeen hundred eighty, that there fell  
 Over the bloom and sweet life of the Spring,  
 Over the fresh earth and the heaven of noon,  
 A horror of great darkness, like the night  
 In day of which the Norland sagas tell,— 15  
 The Twilight of the Gods. The low-hung sky  
 Was black with ominous clouds, save where  
 its rim

Was fringed with a dull glow, like that  
 which climbs

The crater's sides from the red hell below.  
 Birds ceased to sing, and all the barn-yard  
 fowls 20

Roosted; the cattle at the pasture bars  
 Lowed, and looked homeward; bats on leath-  
 ern wings

Flitted abroad; the sounds of labor died;  
 Men prayed, and women wept; all ears grew  
 sharp

To hear the doom-blast of the trumpet shat-  
 ter 25

The black sky, that the dreadful face of  
 Christ

Might look from the rent clouds, not as he  
 looked

A loving guest at Bethany, but stern  
 As Justice and inexorable Law.

*inflexible*

Meanwhile in the old State House, dim as  
 ghosts, 30

Sat the lawgivers of Connecticut,  
 Trembling beneath their legislative robes.

"It is the Lord's Great Day! Let us adjourn,"  
 Some said; and then, as if with one accord,

All eyes were turned to Abraham Davenport.  
 He rose, slow cleaving with his steady voice  
 The intolerable hush. "This well may be 37  
 The Day of Judgment which the world  
 awaits;

But be it so or not, I only know  
 My present duty, and my Lord's command  
 To occupy till He come. So at the post 41  
 Where He hath set me in his providence,  
 I choose, for one, to meet Him face to face,—  
 No faithless servant frightened from my task,  
 But ready when the Lord of the harvest calls;

5-6. *Mianas . . . Rippowams*—small rivers near Stamford, Connecticut. 15. *Norland*—Norse. 16. *Twilight of the Gods*—in Northern mythology, the *Götterdämmerung*, or passing of all things. 25. *trumpet*—*Cf.* Rev. Chapter 20. 28. *Bethany*—*Cf.* Matt. 26: 6-13. 30. *State House*—at Hartford.

And therefore, with all reverence, I would  
say, 46  
Let God do his work, we will see to ours.  
Bring in the candles." And they brought  
them in.

Then by the flaring lights the Speaker read,  
Albeit with husky voice and shaking hands,  
An act to amend an act to regulate 51  
The shad and alewife fisheries. Whereupon  
Wisely and well spake Abraham Davenport,  
Straight to the question, with no figures of  
speech

Save the ten Arab signs, yet not without 55  
The shrewd dry humor natural to the man:  
His awe-struck colleagues listening all the  
while,

Between the pauses of his argument,  
To hear the thunder of the wrath of God 59  
Break from the hollow trumpet of the cloud.

And there he stands in memory to this day,  
Erect, self-poised, a rugged face, half seen  
Against the background of unnatural dark,  
A witness to the ages as they pass,  
That simple duty hath no place for fear. 65

### IN SCHOOL-DAYS

This poem was first gathered into a volume  
in *Miriam and Other Poems* (1871), and also  
appeared in *Favorite Poems* (1877). In  
1888-89 and 1892 it became part of "Poems  
Subjective and Reminiscent."

Still sits the school-house by the road,  
A ragged beggar sleeping;  
Around it still the sumachs grow,  
And blackberry-vines are creeping.

Within, the master's desk is seen, 5  
Deep scarred by raps official;  
The warping floor, the battered seats,  
The jack-knife's carved initial;

The charcoal frescoes on its wall;  
Its door's worn sill, betraying 10

The feet that, creeping slow to school,  
Went storming out to playing!

Long years ago a winter sun  
Shone over it at setting;  
Lit up its western window-panes, 15  
And low eaves' icy fretting.

It touched the tangled golden curls,  
And brown eyes full of grieving,  
Of one who still her steps delayed 20  
When all the school were leaving.

For near her stood the little boy  
Her childish favor singled:  
His cap pulled low upon a face  
Where pride and shame were mingled.

Pushing with restless feet the snow 25  
To right and left, he lingered;—  
As restlessly her tiny hands  
The blue-checked apron fingered.

He saw her lift her eyes; he felt  
The soft hand's light caressing, 30  
And heard the tremble of her voice,  
As if a fault confessing.

"I'm sorry that I spelt the word:  
I hate to go above you,  
Because,"—the brown eyes lower fell,—  
"Because, you see, I love you!" 36

Still memory to a gray-haired man  
That sweet child-face is showing.  
Dear girl! the grasses on her grave  
Have forty years been growing! 40

He lives to learn, in life's hard school,  
How few who pass above him  
Lament their triumph and his loss,  
Like her,—because they love him.

### CENTENNIAL HYMN

First published as a broadside for the Phil-  
adelphia Exposition of 1876; then gathered

52. *alewife*—The alewife is a kind of fish. 55. *ten Arab signs*—the Arabic numerals. 1-2. *Still . . . sleeping*—The construction is confused: "like a sleeping ragged beggar, the school-house still sits by the roadside."

into the *Vision of Echard* volume (1878). In 1888-89 and 1892 it became one of the "Occasional Poems" and was preceded by this note:

"Written for the opening of the International Exhibition, Philadelphia, May 10, 1876. The music for the hymn was written by John K. Paine, and may be found in *The Atlantic Monthly* for June, 1876."

## I

Our fathers' God! from out whose hand  
The centuries fall like grains of sand,  
We meet to-day, united, free,  
And loyal to our land and Thee,  
To thank Thee for the era done, 5  
And trust Thee for the opening one.

## II

Here, where of old, by thy design,  
The fathers spake that word of Thine  
Whose echo is the glad refrain  
Of rended bolt and falling chain, 10  
To grace our festal time, from all  
The zones of earth our guests we call.

## III

Be with us while the New World greets  
The Old World thronging all its streets,  
Unveiling all the triumphs won 15  
By art or toil beneath the sun;  
And unto common good ordain  
This rivalry of hand and brain.

## IV

Thou, who hast here in concord furled  
The war flags of a gathered world, 20  
Beneath our Western skies fulfil  
The Orient's mission of good-will,  
And, freighted with love's Golden Fleece,  
Send back its Argonauts of peace.

## V

For art and labor met in truce, 25  
For beauty made the bride of use,

We thank Thee; but, withal, we crave  
The austere virtues strong to save,  
The honor proof to place or gold,  
The manhood never bought nor sold! 30

## VI

Oh make Thou us, through centuries long,  
In peace secure, in justice strong;  
Around our gift of freedom draw  
The safeguards of Thy righteous law:  
And, cast in some diviner mould, 35  
Let the new cycle shame the old!

## BURNING DRIFT-WOOD

First printed in *At Sundown* (1892) and afterwards in the collected editions.

Before my drift-wood fire I sit,  
And see, with every waif I burn,  
Old dreams and fancies coloring it,  
And folly's unlaidd ghosts return.

O ships of mine, whose swift keels cleft 5  
The enchanted sea on which they sailed,  
Are these poor fragments only left  
Of vain desires and hopes that failed?

Did I not watch from them the light  
Of sunset on my towers in Spain, 10  
And see, far off, uploom in sight  
The Fortunate Isles I might not gain?

Did sudden lift of fog reveal  
Arcadia's vales of song and spring,  
And did I pass, with grazing keel, 15  
The rocks whereon the sirens sing?

Have I not drifted hard upon  
The unmapped regions lost to man,  
The cloud-pitched tents of Prester John,  
The palace domes of Kubla Khan? 20

Did land winds blow from jasmine flowers,  
Where Youth the ageless Fountain fills?

23. **Golden Fleece**—In Greek mythology Jason and his fellow explorers (the Argonauts) set out in quest of the Golden Fleece. 2. **waif**—bit of picked-up wood. 14. **Arcadia's**—See note 179, p. 662. 19. **Prester John**—the fabulous magician-monarch of medieval fable. 20. **Kubla Khan**—Cf. Coleridge's poem of that name. 21. **jasmine flowers**—much celebrated in oriental lyric poetry. 22. **Youth . . . Fountain**—the Fountain of Youth, sought in Florida by Ponce de Leon.

- Did Love make sign from rose blown bowers,  
And gold from Eldorado's hills?
- Alas! the gallant ships that sailed 25  
On blind Adventure's errand sent,  
Howe'er they laid their courses, failed  
To reach the haven of Content.
- And of my ventures, those alone  
Which Love had freighted, safely sped, 30  
Seeking a good beyond my own,  
By clear-eyed Duty piloted.
- O mariners, hoping still to meet  
The luck Arabian voyagers met,  
And find in Bagdad's moonlit street, 35  
Haroun al Raschid walking yet,
- Take with you, on your Sea of Dreams,  
The fair, fond fancies dear to youth.  
I turn from all that only seems,  
And seek the sober grounds of truth. 40
- What matter that it is not May,  
That birds have flown, and trees are bare,  
That darker grows the shortening day,  
And colder blows the wintry air!
- The wrecks of passion and desire, 45  
The castles I no more rebuild,  
May fitly feed my drift-wood fire,  
And warm the hands that age has chilled.
- Whatever perished with my ships,  
I only know the best remains; 50  
A song of praise is on my lips  
For losses which are now my gains.
- Heap high my hearth! No worth is lost;  
No wisdom with the folly dies.  
Burn on, poor shreds, your holocaust 55  
Shall be my evening sacrifice!
- Far more than all I dared to dream,  
Unsought before my door I see;  
On wings of fire and steeds of steam  
The world's great wonders come to me,
- And holier signs, unmarked before, 61  
Of Love to seek and Power to save,—  
The righting of the wronged and poor,  
The man evolving from the slave;
- And life, no longer chance or fate, 65  
Safe in the gracious Fatherhood.  
I fold o'er-wearied hands and wait,  
In full assurance of the good.
- And well the waiting time must be,  
Though brief or long its granted days, 70  
If Faith and Hope and Charity  
Sit by my evening hearth-fire's blaze.
- And with them, friends whom Heaven has  
spared,  
Whose love my heart has comforted,  
And, sharing all my joys, has shared 75  
My tender memories of the dead,—
- Dear souls who left us lonely here,  
Bound on their last, long voyage, to  
whom  
We, day by day, are drawing near, 80  
Where every bark has sailing room.
- I know the solemn monotone  
Of waters calling unto me;  
I know from whence the airs have blown  
That whisper of the Eternal Sea
- As low my fires of drift-wood burn, 85  
I hear that sea's deep sounds increase,  
And, fair in sunset light, discern  
Its mirage-lifted Isles of Peace.

## THE CITY OF A DAY

First published in *The Stranger in Lowell* (1845), where it formed all of the first section, and part of the second. The pages of this book, said Whittier in the intro-

24. Eldorado's—See note 42, p. 745. 36. Haroun al Raschid—the caliph celebrated in the Arabian Nights.

duction, "are a transcript—too free and frank perhaps—of impressions made upon his mind by the common incidents of daily life." When putting together the *Prose Works* of 1866, Whittier fused together the two sections as indicated, dropping the latter part of section 11 ("The Heart of the Stranger") completely. In the collected editions the same arrangement was kept.

Leaders of New England thought viewed with admiration and alarm the advance of industrialism in that region, particularly at Lowell, Massachusetts, which seemed for a time to promise becoming a model mill village or town. To understand Whittier's allusions it is necessary to remember that Lowell stands on the Merrimac River at the mouth of the Concord. Around Pawtucket Falls a canal was built in 1804; and later (1822) a power dam was constructed by the Merrimack Manufacturing Co. In 1823 the first cloth was woven in the Lowell mills; and the town grew from 2,000 in 1826 to 18,000 in 1836. As the work in the mills attracted "female laborers," the corporation provided boarding-houses, and sought to look after the education and culture of the operatives. One expression was *The Lowell Offering* (1840-1845), a periodical edited by the factory girls. In 1840 the Irish commenced to come in, and were followed by other immigrants, as Whittier notes. Whittier's half-conscious prophecy of the sadder results of industrialism, mingled with his admiration of Yankee thrift and shrewdness, is typical of similar comment by Thoreau, Emerson, and other New Englanders.

THIS, then, is Lowell,—a city springing up, like the enchanted palaces of the Arabian tales, as it were in a single night, stretching far and wide its chaos of brick masonry and painted shingles, filling the angle of the confluence of the Concord and the Merrimac with the sights and sounds of trade and industry. Marvellously here have art and labor wrought their modern miracles. I can scarcely realize the fact that a few years ago these rivers, now tamed and subdued to the purposes of man and charmed into slavish subjection to the wizard of mechanism, rolled unchecked towards the ocean the waters of the Winnepesaukee and the rock-rimmed springs of the White Mountains, and rippled down their falls in the wild freedom of Nature. A stranger, in view of all this wonderful change, feels himself, as it were, thrust forward into a new century; he seems treading on the outer circle of the millennium of steam engines and cotton mills. Work is here the patron saint. Everything bears his image and superscription. Here is no place for that respectable class of citizens called gentlemen, and their much vilified brethren, familiarly known as loafers. Over the gateways of this new-world Manchester glares the inscription, "Work, or die!" Here

"Every worm beneath the moon  
Draws different threads, and late or soon  
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon."

The founders of this city probably never dreamed of the theory of Charles Lamb in respect to the origin of labor:—

9. **Winnepesaukee**—Lake Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire (where the White Mountains are also located) drains into a tributary of the Merrimac. 16. **Manchester**—The building of the Manchester and Liverpool Railway in 1830 had led to a great "boom" in Manchester, which became one of the leading industrial centers in Great Britain.

- "Who first invented work, and thereby bound  
 The holiday rejoicing spirit down  
 To the never-ceasing importunity  
 Of business in the green fields and the town?  
 Sabbathless Satan,—he who his unglad  
 Task ever plies midst rotatory burnings;  
 For wrath divine has made him like a wheel  
 In that red realm from whence are no returnings."

Rather, of course, would they adopt Carlyle's apostrophe of "Divine labor,  
 10 noble, ever fruitful,—the grand, sole miracle of man;" for this is indeed a city  
 consecrated to thrift,—dedicated, every square rod of it, to the divinity of  
 work; the gospel of industry preached daily and hourly from some thirty  
 temples, each huger than the Milan Cathedral or the Temple of Jeddo, the  
 Mosque of St. Sophia or the Chinese pagoda of a hundred bells; its mighty  
 15 sermons uttered by steam and water-power; its music the everlasting jar of  
 mechanism and the organ-swell of many waters; scattering the cotton and  
 woollen leaves of its evangel from the wings of steamboats and rail-cars  
 throughout the land; its thousand priests and its thousands of priestesses minis-  
 tering around their spinning-jenny and power-loom altars, or thronging the  
 20 long, unshaded streets in the level light of sunset. After all, it may well be ques-  
 tioned whether this gospel, according to Poor Richard's Almanac, is precisely  
 calculated for the redemption of humanity. Labor, graduated to man's simple  
 wants, necessities, and unperverted tastes, is doubtless well; but all beyond  
 this is weariness to flesh and spirit. Every web which falls from these restless  
 25 looms has a history more or less connected with sin and suffering, beginning  
 with slavery and ending with overwork and premature death.

A few years ago, while travelling in Pennsylvania, I encountered a small,  
 dusky-browed German of the name of Etzler. He was possessed by a belief  
 30 that the world was to be restored to its paradisiacal state by the sole agency  
 of mechanics, and that he had himself discovered the means of bringing about  
 this very desirable consummation. His whole mental atmosphere was thronged  
 with spectral enginery; wheel within wheel; plans of hugest mechanism;  
 Brobdignagian steam-engines; Niagaras of water-power; wind-mills with  
 "sail-broad vans," like those of Satan in chaos, by the proper application of  
 35 which every valley was to be exalted and every hill laid low; old forests seized  
 by their shaggy tops and uprooted; old morasses drained; the tropics made  
 cool; the eternal ices melted around the poles; the ocean itself covered with  
 artificial islands, blossoming gardens of the blessed, rocking gently on the bosom  
 of the deep. Give him "three hundred thousand dollars and ten years' time,"  
 40 and he would undertake to do the work. Wrong, pain, and sin, being in his  
 view but the results of our physical necessities, ill-gratified desires, and natural

1-8. "Who first . . . returnings"—Whittier quotes from memory, and badly mangles,  
 Lamb's sonnet "Work," which begins "Who first invented work and bound the free." 9-10. "Di-  
 vine . . . man"—a reminiscence of passages in Bk. III of Carlyle's *Past and Present* (1843). 17.  
 evangel—message of good tidings. 21. gospel . . . Poor Richard's—that is, such self-regard-  
 ing maxims as "A penny saved is a penny earned." 33. Brobdignagian—huge; from the second  
 part of *Gulliver's Travels*. 34. "sail-broad vans"—*Cf. Paradise Lost*, Bk. II, line 927. 35. valley  
 . . . low—*Cf. Isa. 40:4*.

yearnings for a better state, were to vanish before the millennium of mechanism. "It would be," said he, "as ridiculous then to dispute and quarrel about the means of life as it would be now about water to drink by the side of mighty rivers, or about permission to breathe the common air." To his mind the great forces of Nature took the shape of mighty and benignant spirits, sent hither-  
 ward to be the servants of man in restoring to him his lost paradise; waiting  
 only for his word of command to apply their giant energies to the task, but as  
 yet struggling blindly and aimlessly, giving ever and anon gentle hints, in the  
 way of earthquake, fire, and flood, that they are weary of idleness, and would  
 fain be set at work. Looking down, as I now do, upon these huge brick work-  
 shops, I have thought of poor Etzler, and wondered whether he would admit,  
 were he with me, that his mechanical forces have here found their proper em-  
 ployment of millennium making. Grinding on, each in his iron harness, invis-  
 ible, yet shaking, by his regulated and repressed power, his huge prisonhouse  
 from basement to capstone, is it true that the genii of mechanism are really at  
 work here, raising us, by wheel and pulley, steam and water-power, slowly up  
 that inclined plane from whose top stretches the broad table-land of promise?

Many of the streets of Lowell present a lively and neat aspect, and are adorned  
 with handsome public and private buildings; but they lack one pleasant feature  
 of older towns,—broad spreading shade-trees. One feels disposed to quarrel with  
 the characteristic utilitarianism of the first settlers, which swept so entirely away  
 the green beauty of Nature. For the last few days it has been as hot here as  
 Nebuchadnezzar's furnace or Monsieur Chabert's oven, the sun glaring down  
 from a copper sky upon these naked, treeless streets, in traversing which one is  
 tempted to adopt the language of a warm-weather poet:—

"The lean, like walking skeletons, go stalking pale and gloomy;  
 The fat, like redhot warming-pans, send hotter fancies through me;  
 I wake from dreams of polar ice, on which I've been a slider,  
 Like fishes dreaming of the sea and waking in the spider."

How unlike the elm-lined avenues of New Haven, upon whose cool and  
 graceful panorama the stranger looks down upon the Judge's Cave, or the  
 vine-hung pinnacles of West Rock, its tall spires rising white and clear above  
 the level greenness!—or the breezy leafiness of Portland, with its wooded islands  
 in the distance, and itself overhung with verdant beauty, rippling and waving  
 in the same cool breeze which stirs the waters of the beautiful Bay of Casco!  
 But time will remedy all this; and, when Lowell shall have numbered half the  
 years of her sister cities, her newly planted elms and maples, which now only  
 cause us to contrast their shadeless stems with the leafy glory of their parents  
 of the forest, will stretch out to the future visitor arms of welcome and repose.

There is one beautiful grove in Lowell,—that on Chapel Hill,—where a  
 cluster of fine old oaks lift their sturdy stems and green branches, in close  
 proximity to the crowded city, blending the cool rustle of their leaves with  
 the din of machinery. As I look at them in this gray twilight they seem lonely  
 and isolated, as if wondering what has become of their old forest companions,

23. furnace—*Cf.* Dan. 2:19 ff. Monsieur Chabert was Master Chiffinch's cook in Scott's *Feveril of the Peak*, Ch. 22.



and vainly endeavoring to recognize in the thronged and dusty streets before them those old, graceful colonnades of maple and thick-shaded oaken vistas, stretching from river to river, carpeted with the flowers and grasses of spring, or ankle deep with leaves of autumn, through whose leafy canopy the sunlight  
 5 melted in upon wild birds, shy deer, and red Indians. Long may these oaks remain to remind us that, if there be utility in the new, there was beauty in the old, leafy Puseyites of Nature, calling us back to the past, but, like their Oxford brethren, calling in vain; for neither in polemics nor in art can we go backward in an age whose motto is ever "Onward."

- 10 The population of Lowell is constituted mainly of New Englanders; but there are representatives here of almost every part of the civilized world. The good-humored face of the Milesian meets one at almost every turn; the shrewdly solemn Scotchman, the transatlantic Yankee, blending the crafty thrift of Bryce Snailsfoot with the stern religious heroism of Cameron; the blue-eyed, fair-  
 15 haired German from the towered hills which overlook the Rhine,—slow, heavy, and unpromising in his exterior, yet of the same mould and mettle of the men who rallied for "fatherland" at the Tyrtean call of Korner and beat back the chivalry of France from the banks of the Katzbach,—the countrymen of Richter, and Goethe, and our own Follen. Here, too, are pedlers from Hamburg, and  
 20 Bavaria, and Poland, with their sharp Jewish faces, and black, keen eyes. At this moment, beneath my window are two sturdy, sunbrowned Swiss maidens grinding music for a livelihood, rehearsing in a strange Yankee land the simple songs of their old mountain home, reminding me, by their foreign garb and language, of

25 "Lauterbrunnen's peasant girl."

- Poor wanderers! I cannot say that I love their music; but now, as the notes die away, and, to use the words of Dr. Holmes, "silence comes like a poultice to heal the wounded ear," I feel grateful for their visitation. Away from crowded thoroughfares, from brick walls and dusty avenues, at the sight of  
 30 these poor peasants I have gone in thought to the vale of Chamouny, and seen, with Coleridge, the morning star pausing on the "bald, awful head of sovereign Blanc," and the sun rise and set upon snowy-crested mountains, down in whose

7. **Puseyites**—followers of Edward B. Pusey (1800-1882), one of the leaders of the Oxford movement, which sought to revive the spiritual life of the Anglican Church by a return to theological practices of the early centuries. 12. **Milesian**—Irishman. 13. **transatlantic Yankee**—in apposition to Scotchman. 14. **Bryce Snailsfoot**—shifty peddler in *The Pirate* by Sir Walter Scott. 14. **Cameron**—Richard Cameron, founder of an extreme sect of the Covenanters, who appears in *Old Mortality* by Sir Walter Scott. 17. **Tyrtean**—The Spartans, being instructed by an oracle to choose a general from the Athenians, selected in derision the lame schoolmaster Tyrtaeus; but his martial lyrics proved so inspiring as to make the Spartans victorious. 17. **Korner**—Karl Theodor Körner (1791-1813), killed in battle, whose volume of patriotic lyrics, *Leier und Schwert* (1814), roused German nationalism against Napoleon. 18. **Katzback**—At the Battle of Katzbach Blücher, with 90,000 troops, defeated 100,000 Frenchmen, Aug. 26, 1813. 18. **Richter**—Jean Paul Richter (1763-1825), German romantic humorist. 19. **Goethe**—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), much admired by the New England poets of the period. 19. **Follen**—Charles Theodore Christian Follen (1795-1840), German-born educator and preacher. 27-28. **silence . . . ear**—"And silence, like a poultice, comes To heal the blows of sound."

—Oliver Wendell Holmes, "The Music-Grinders."

30-32. **Chamouny . . . Blanc**—Cf. Coleridge's poem, "Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni." Coleridge's line is: "On thy bald awful head, O sovran Blanc!"

valleys the night still lingers; and, following in the track of Byron and Rousseau, have watched the lengthening shadows of the hills on the beautiful waters of the Genevan lake. Blessings, then, upon these young wayfarers, for they have "blessed me unawares." In an hour of sickness and lassitude they have wrought for me the miracle of Loretto's Chapel, and borne me away from the scenes around me and the sense of personal suffering to that wonderful land where Nature seems still uttering, from lake and valley, and from mountains whose eternal snows lean on the hard, blue heaven, the echoes of that mighty hymn of a new-created world, when "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

But of all classes of foreigners the Irish are by far the most numerous. Light-hearted, wrong-headed, impulsive, uncalculating, with an Oriental love of hyperbole, and too often a common dislike of cold water and of that gem which the fable tells us rests at the bottom of the well, the Celtic elements of their character do not readily accommodate themselves to those of the hard, cool, self-relying Anglo-Saxon. I am free to confess to a very thorough dislike of their religious intolerance and bigotry, but am content to wait for the change that time and the attrition of new circumstances and ideas must necessarily make in this respect. Meanwhile I would strive to reverence man as man, irrespective of his birthplace. A stranger in a strange land is always to me an object of sympathy and interest. Amidst all his apparent gayety of heart and national drollery and wit, the poor Irish emigrant has sad thoughts of the "ould mother of him," sitting lonely in her solitary cabin by the bog-side; recollections of a father's blessing and a sister's farewell are haunting him; a grave mound in a distant churchyard far beyond the "wide wathers" has an eternal greenness in his memory; for there, perhaps, lies a "darlint child" or a "swate crather" who once loved him. The new world is forgotten for the moment; blue Killarney and the Liffey sparkle before him, and Glendalough stretches beneath him its dark, still mirror; he sees the same evening sunshine rest upon and hallow alike with Nature's blessing the ruins of the Seven Churches of Ireland's apostolic age, the broken mound of the Druids, and the round towers of the Phoenician sun-worshippers; pleasant and mournful recollections of his home waken within him; and the rough and seemingly careless and lighthearted laborer melts into tears. It is no light thing to abandon one's own country and household gods. Touching and beautiful was the injunction of the prophet of the Hebrews: "Ye shall not oppress the stranger; for ye know the heart of the stranger, seeing that ye were strangers in the land of Egypt."

1. Byron and Rousseau—*Cf. Child's Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto III, stanzas LXXXV ff. 4. "blessed . . . unawares"—*Cf. Coleridge's The Ancient Mariner*, Pt. IV, stanza XIV, last line. 5. Loretto's Chapel—a chapel near Ancona, Italy, noted for its supposed miraculous cures. 9-10. "the morning stars . . . joy"—*Cf. Job 38:7*. 17. religious . . . bigotry—The intrusion of Roman Catholic Irish into Protestant Massachusetts naturally aroused religious friction. 28. Killarney—The Lakes of Killarney are among the most beautiful in Ireland. 28. Liffey—the river Liffey, on which Dublin stands. 28. Glendalough—famous Irish lake. 30. Seven Churches—In the early ages in Ireland churches were often built in groups of seven; hence the phrase "the Seven Churches of Glendalough." 31. mound . . . Druids—Certain mounds in Ireland were, when Whittier wrote, supposed to be associated with Druidic rites. 31. round towers—The round towers found in Ireland, long a source of controversy to archaeologists, and now known to be of Christian origin, were once supposed to mark a Phoenician invasion. 35. prophet—*Cf. Ex. 33:9*.

# EDGAR ALLAN POE

1809-1849

## I. A YOUNG VIRGINIA "GENTLEMAN" (1809-1827)

- 1809 Born January 19, in Boston, second son of David and Elizabeth Arnold Poe, actors. After July, 1810, the father disappeared.
- 1810 Mrs. Poe went to Richmond with her infant son, dying there December 8, 1811. Young Edgar taken into the family of John and Frances Keeling Allan. John Allan became Poe's legal guardian, but never formally adopted him.
- 1815-1820 The Allans took Poe to England and Scotland, Poe attending a number of schools, especially Manor House School at Stoke Newington (1817-20).
- 1820-1826 Poe led the life of a Richmond boy of good social standing, tutoring, reading much contemporary (romantic) literature, and falling in love with Jane Stith Stanard ("Helen, thy beauty is to me") and Sarah Elmira Royster, to whom he was "engaged." Growing antagonism between Poe and John Allan.
- 1826 February, Poe matriculated at the University of Virginia, whence he was compelled to withdraw at Christmas, 1827, because of the refusal of his guardian to make good his gambling debts.
- 1826-1827 Poe discovered that Sarah Elmira Royster was to marry another man. After quarreling with John Allan, he left the Allan home (March 19, 1827), eventually going to Boston (April, 1827).

## II. THE SOLDIER OF FORTUNE (1827-1831)

- 1827 Poe published anonymously in the spring, from the printing press of a young friend in Boston, *Tamerlane and Other Poems. By a Bostonian*.
- 1827 May 26, enlisted in the United States Army (Battery H, First Artillery) as Edgar A. Perry. On October 31, 1827, the battery was transferred to Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island, in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina. Sent to Fortress Monroe, Virginia, December, 1828.
- 1829 Poe promoted to be regimental sergeant-major. Upon the death of Mrs. Allan (February 28, 1829), Poe returned briefly to Richmond; attempt at reconciliation with Allan. Poe discharged from the army April 15, 1829. While John Allan sought to have Poe appointed to West Point, Poe struggled to begin his literary career in Baltimore; living (August, 1829) in the house of Mrs. Maria Clemm, mother of Virginia, Poe's cousin. Published in Baltimore in December *Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems. By Edgar A. Poe*.
- 1829-1830 Brief return to Richmond; violent quarrel with John Allan (May, 1830). Left Richmond (May or June) for West Point, which he entered July 1, 1830.

1830–1831 Unhappy at West Point, Poe continued writing, and deliberately neglected his duties as a cadet in order to be court-martialed and discharged (March 6, 1831, though he left February 19).

### III. HACK-WRITER AND GENIUS (1831–1844)

- 1831 February 20, arrived in New York City. Published *Poems* ("Second Edition") in March. Returned to Baltimore, and the Clemm household, where he lived surrounded by poverty, illness, and debt.
- 1832 A futile return to Richmond, where Mr. Allan had married again, ended Poe's relations with his guardian. Mr. Allan died March 27, 1834. Five of Poe's tales published in the *Philadelphia Saturday Courier*.
- 1833 October 12, Poe awarded a prize of \$100 by the Baltimore *Saturday Visiter* for *The MS. Found in a Bottle*.
- 1834–1835 Poe in desperate circumstances; befriended by John Pendleton Kennedy, who was instrumental in calling him to the attention of Thomas W. White, editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*.
- 1835 In August, Poe returned to Richmond to join the staff of the foregoing magazine, a position which, except for certain periods, he held to January, 1837.
- 1835 September 22, Poe secretly married his cousin Virginia. A second, public ceremony took place in Richmond May 16, 1836, Virginia being then thirteen.
- 1836 Despite incessant labors on the *Southern Literary Messenger*, notably as a critic of contemporary literature, Poe felt circumscribed and unsuccessful, and in December resolved to go North.
- 1837 Poe took his family to New York City in February. A second burst of creative energy began with this remove.
- 1838 Poe published *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (July). In the summer, the Poes removed to Philadelphia, where the poet eventually became editor with William E. Burton of the latter's *Gentleman's Magazine* (July, 1839), but the connection was not lasting.
- 1839 Poe published in Philadelphia in two volumes *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (dated on title-pages 1840).
- 1841 Poe's association with *Graham's Magazine* began (January), to which he contributed much of his best work (to April, 1842).
- 1843 Poe struggled to establish a magazine of his own, but the project failed.
- 1844 The Poes left Philadelphia (April) for New York. Virginia Clemm Poe in increasingly bad health. Poe labored at hack work.

### IV. THE AUTHOR OF "THE RAVEN" (1844–1849)

- 1844 Poe laboring at hack work for the New York *Evening Mirror*, edited by Nathaniel P. Willis.
- 1845 "The Raven" published February 8 in the *Evening Mirror*. Poe sprang into popular fame. (First "official" appearance of the poem.)
- 1845–1846 Poe at work on the *Broadway Journal*. Beginning of his association with Frances Sargent Osgood and other "literati."
- 1845 Publication of *Tales* (June). Poe first met Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman. Publication (later in the year) of *The Raven and Other Poems*.
- 1846 The Poes, after many changes of residence, removed to Fordham.

- 1847 January 30, Virginia Poe died.  
 1848 Poe published *Eureka: A Prose Poem*. Beginning of emotional and sentimental relations with romantic women, especially Mrs. Whitman, with whom a marriage contract (never fulfilled) was drawn up (December 15, 1848).  
 1849 Poe went to Richmond (July). Died, in mysterious circumstances, Baltimore, October 7, 1849.

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*Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by E. C. Stedman and G. E. Woodberry, Stone & Kimball, 1894-95, 10 vols., Scribner, 1914; *Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by J. A. Harrison, Crowell, 1902, 17 vols. (the Virginia edition, usually regarded as the best; Vols. I and XVII are biographical); besides these two standard editions there are innumerable other editions of varying degrees of trustworthiness. John W. Ostrom, ed., *Letters of Edgar Allan Poe*, Cambridge, Mass., 1948, 2 vols. (supersedes all other collections of letters). *The Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by Killis Campbell, Ginn, 1917, is the best one-volume edition of the poems. *Poe's Short Stories*, ed. by Killis Campbell, Harcourt, Brace, 1927 (American Authors). The most usable one-volume book of selections is *The Book of Poe*, ed. by Addison Hibbard, Doubleday, Doran, 1929. However, see also the selections ed. Margaret Alterton and Hardin Craig (American Writers Series), American Book Co., 1935.

The greatest representative of the American romantic movement in point of influence and popularity, Poe has suffered from an enveloping mist of legend which he himself helped to create. A hard-working journalist who turned out thousands of words of copy was combined in him with a genius of febrile and dreamy temperament; and this personality developed amidst disastrous private surroundings and in a period of American literature which combined reverence for the sentimental with indifference to the real demands of the artist upon his time and his readers. The result was the Poe tragedy.

As Poe falls into perspective, the conflict between the America of his day and his own temperament more markedly appears, and he becomes not so much a mysterious spirit from another world as an imperfect human being born out of his

due time and therefore in conflict with his times. He was a child of romance; but he combined with his "phantasmagoric" imagination a mathematical lucidity of statement which must be reckoned with. Therefore it was that he revolved around the problem of science in modern life, seeking by some short cut, some feat of mental prestidigitation, to solve the mysteries of existence by the application of pseudo-scientific formulae. From phrenology to botany, from mathematics to mysticism his restless spirit wandered, rationalizing his disappointments in actual life into dreams of gigantic intellectual attainments. A self-conscious artist, he strove continually to better his own technique, especially in the short story—a genre with which his name is immortally associated—and in the poem which seeks by blurred image and verbal melody to hypnotize the reader into a willing suspension of disbelief.

Because of the importance of Poe's development as a craftsman, the editors have broken their rule of giving only the definitive text of the selections printed, and have included variant readings to permit a study of Poe at work revising his material.

## A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM

In the *Tamerlane* volume (1827), the germ of this poem, entitled "Imitation," is a poem of twenty lines, the main resemblance of which to the final version is in the meter. In the *Al Aaraaf* volume (1829) the poem has become "To ————" and is composed of forty lines divided into four unequal stanzas. Lines 12-17 of the final version, with some slight alterations in phraseology, form the first six lines of stanza three of the 1829 version. Omitted from the *Poems* of 1831 and from the *Raven* volume of 1845, this poem received its final revision upon its appearance in *Flag of Our Union* (1849). The present text is that of Griswold's edition of the *Works* (1850).

Take this kiss upon the brow!  
And, in parting from you now,  
Thus much let me avow—  
You are not wrong, who deem  
That my days have been a dream; 5  
Yet if hope has flown away  
In a night, or in a day,  
In a vision, or in none,  
Is it therefore the less *gone*?  
*All* that we see or seem 10  
Is but a dream within a dream.

I stand amid the roar  
Of a surf-tormented shore,  
And I hold within my hand

Grains of the golden sand— 15  
How few! yet how they creep  
Through my fingers to the deep,  
While I weep—while I weep!  
O God! can I not grasp  
Them with a tighter clasp? 20  
O God! can I not save  
*One* from the pitiless wave?  
Is *all* that we see or seem  
But a dream within a dream?

## SONG FROM "AL AARAAF"

"Al Aaraaf," the title poem of the volume of that name (1829), is a confused allegorical poem which neither a revision in 1831 nor a return to the original version in 1845 did much to clarify. The maiden Nesace, type of ideal beauty, lives in Al Aaraaf, the burning star observed by the astronomer Tycho Brahe. The wrath of God is expressed against her because men have imagined a "model" of his infinity; wherefore Nesace is ordered to leave Al Aaraaf and fly across the heavens

"and so be  
To every heart a barrier and a ban  
Lest the stars totter in the guilt of man"—

apparently man's low idea of God and beauty. At the conclusion of Part I Nesace begins her journey. In Part II she comes to one of Poe's amazing temples "out of space, out of time," whence she addresses the lyric here reprinted.

'Neath blue-bell or streamer— Or tufted wild spray That keeps, from the dreamer The moonbeam away— Bright beings! that ponder, With half closing eyes, On the stars which your wonder Hath drawn from the skies, 'Till they glance thro' the shade, and Come down to your brow Like — eyes of the maiden Who calls on you now— Arise! from your dreaming In violet bowers, To duty beseeching These star-litten hours— And shake from your tresses Encumber'd with dew The breath of those kisses That cumber them too— (O! how, without you, Love! Could angels be blest?) Those kisses of true love That lull'd ye to rest! Up!—shake from your wing Each hindering thing: The dew of the night— It would weigh down your flight; And true love caresses— O! leave them apart! They are light on the tresses, But lead on the heart.	5 10 15 20 25 30
Ligeia! Ligeia! My beautiful one! Whose harshest idea Will to melody run, O! is it thy will On the breezes to toss? Or, capriciously still, Like the lone Albatross, Incumbent on night (As she on the air) To keep watch with delight On the harmony there?	35 40
Ligeia! wherever Thy image may be, No magic shall sever Thy music from thee: Thou hast bound many eyes In a dreamy sleep— But the strains still arise Which <i>thy</i> vigilance keep— The sound of the rain Which leaps down to the flower, And dances again In the rhythm of the shower— The murmur that springs From the growing of grass Are the music of things— But are modell'd, alas!— Away, then, my dearest, O! hie thee away	45 50 55 60

4. **moonbeam**—"In Scripture is this passage—"The sun shall not harm thee by day, nor the moon by night." It is perhaps not generally known that the moon, in Egypt, has the effect of producing blindness to those who sleep with the face exposed to its rays, to which circumstance the passage evidently alludes." (Poe's note) 5. **Bright beings!**—followers of Nesace, who have followed her from Al Aaraaf to the temple. 7. **wonder**—The general drift of the passage is to show forth mystically the relation between the human desire of beauty and the various beautiful aspects of the universe, especially the night stars. 11. **maiden**—Nesace, who speaks the whole lyric. 14. **violet bowers**—Poe pictures Nesace's home on Al Aaraaf as a bower of flowers. 21-22. In the first version of "Al Aaraaf" the parentheses were replaced by square brackets throughout the poem.—Having addressed the beings of her train generally, Nesace (Beauty) now calls specifically upon Love to rise above human imperfections (**Each hindering thing**). 24. Until the final version, the place of the exclamation point was taken by a colon. 30. Until the final version, the place of the exclamation point was taken by a comma. The general meaning is: The caresses of imperfect human love weigh down the ideal concepts of which man is capable. 33. **Ligeia!**—the personification of the harmony of nature. One of the sirens was so named. 40. **Albatross**—"The Albatross is said to sleep on the wing." (Poe's note) 45-60. The general sense of this passage is that no magic shall intervene to prevent the poet's seeing ideal beauty and harmony, even though many are dead to the vision. The sound of rain, and other natural objects of beauty, are proof that Ligeia (natural harmony) is still watching over the earth, though these phenomena are "modell'd"—that is, take form in imperfect finite modes of being. 57. **murmur**—"I met with this idea in an old English tale, which I am now unable to obtain[,] and quote from memory:—"The verie essence and, as it were, springe-head and origine of all musiche is the verie pleasaunte sounde which the trees of the forest do make when they growe.'" (Poe's note)

To springs that lie clearest  
 Beneath the moon ray—  
 To lone lake that smiles, 65  
 In its dream of deep rest,  
 At the many star-isles  
 That enjewel its breast—  
 Where wild flowers, creeping,  
 Have mingled their shade, 70  
 On its margin is sleeping  
 Full many a maid—  
 Some have left the cool glade, and  
 Have slept with the bee—  
 Arouse them, my maiden, 75  
 On moorland and lea—  
 Go! breathe on their slumber,  
 All softly in ear,  
 The musical number  
 They slumber'd to hear— 80  
 For what can awaken  
 An angel so soon,  
 Whose sleep hath been taken  
 Beneath the cold moon,  
 As the spell which no slumber 85  
 Of witchery may test,  
 The rhythymical number  
 Which lull'd him to rest?

in length, but kept certain changes brought in by the 1831 poem.

Romance, who loves to nod and sing,  
With drowsy head and folded wing,  
Among the green leaves as they shake  
Far down within some shadowy lake,  
To me a painted paroquet                 5  
Hath been—a most familiar bird—  
Taught me my alphabet to say—  
To lisp my very earliest word  
While in the wild wood I did lie,  
A child—with a most knowing eye.         10

Of late, eternal Condor years  
So shake the very Heaven on high  
With tumult as they thunder by,  
I have no time for idle cares  
Through gazing on the unquiet sky. 15  
And when an hour with calmer wings  
Its down upon my spirit flings—  
That little time with lyre and rhyme  
To while away—forbidden things!  
My heart would feel to be a crime 20  
Unless it trembled with the strings!

## ROMANCE

## SONNET—TO SCIENCE

In the *Al Araaf* volume (1829) this was entitled "Preface," and the text was very close to the final version. In the 1831 volume the title was changed to "Introduction," and the poem was expanded to sixty-six lines. The final version returned to the *Al Araaf* poem

This sonnet is properly the introduction to "Al Aaraaf," to which it is the key, and by Poe was always printed just before that poem. Conventional usage has led editors to divorce it from its proper setting. The version in the *Al Aaraaf* volume (1829) was reprinted, with

74. slept . . . bee—"The wild bee will not sleep in the shade if there be moonlight. "The rhyme in this verse, as in one about sixty lines before, has an appearance of affection. It is, however, imitated from Sir W. Scott, or rather from Claud Halcro—in whose mouth I admired its effect:

"O! were there an island,  
Tho' ever so wild  
Where woman might smile, and  
No man be beguil'd, &c." (Poe's note)

9. The final comma was introduced in the 1845 version. 11. "O, then the eternal Condor years" (1831). The condor figures much in South American poetry, but apparently makes its first appearance in English verse with Thomas Campbell's "Power of Russia" (1837). Poe therefore precedes Campbell. 12. "So shake the very air on high" (1829); "So shook the very Heavens on high" (1831). 13. "With tumult as they thunder'd by" (1831). 14. "I hardly have had time for cares" (1829); "I had no time for idle cares" (1831). 15. "Thro' gazing on th' unquiet sky!" (1829). 16. "And, when an hour with calmer wings" (1829); "Or if an hour with calmer wing" (1831). 17. "Its down did on my spirit fling" (1831). 18. "That little hour with lyre and rhyme" (1831). 19. "To while away—forbidden thing!" (1831). 20. "My heart half tear'd to be a crime" (1831). 21. "Did it not tremble with the strings!" (1829).



one slight change in punctuation, in the 1831 volume; but the final version shows certain important changes.

Science! true daughter of Old Time thou art!  
Who alterest all things with thy peering eyes.  
Why preyest thou thus upon the poet's heart,  
Vulture, whose wings are dull realities?  
How should he love thee? or how deem thee  
wise, 5  
Who wouldst not leave him in his wander-  
ing

To seek for treasure in the jewelled skies,  
Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing?  
Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car?  
And driven the Hamadryad from the wood  
To seek a shelter in some happier star? 11  
Hast thou not torn the Naiad from her flood,  
The Elfin from the green grass, and from  
me  
The summer dream beneath the tamarind  
tree?

### TO HELEN

"Helen" was Jane Stith Stanard, concern-  
ing whom see Hervey Allen, *Israfel*, Vol. I,  
pp. 106 ff. The poem in its first shape may  
be found in the 1831 volume, and its final  
version in 1845.

Helen, thy beauty is to me  
Like those Nicéan barks of yore,  
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,  
The weary, way-worn wanderer bore  
To his own native shore. 5

On desperate seas long wont to roam,  
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,  
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home  
To the glory that was Greece,  
And the grandeur that was Rome. 10

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche  
How statue-like I see thee stand,  
The agate lamp within thy hand!  
Ah, Psyche, from the regions which  
Are Holy-Land! 15

### ISRAFEL

This poem first appears in the 1831 vol-  
ume, where it has the same number of  
stanzas as in the final version, which, how-  
ever, is expanded and changed from the  
earlier one. In general, Israfel is symbolic of  
the romantic ideal of the poet. Poe adds a  
footnote to the title as follows: "And the  
angel Israfel, [whose heart-strings are a lute,  
and] who has the sweetest voice of all God's  
creatures—KORAN." The passage in brackets  
first appears in 1845, and the phrase is derived  
from Moore's *Lalla Rookh*.

In Heaven a spirit doth dwell  
"Whose heart-strings are a lute;"  
None sing so wildly well  
As the angel Israfel,  
And the giddy stars (so legends tell), 5  
Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell  
Of his voice, all mute.

1. "Science! meet daughter of old Time thou art" (1831).
3. "Why prey'st . . ." (1831).
4. "Vulture! whose wings are dull realities!" (1831).
5. "How should he love thee—or how deem thee wise" (1831).
6. 1831 has a comma at the end of the line.
7. "jewell'd" (1831).
8. "Albeit he soar with an undaunted wing" (1831); "Albeit, he soar . . ." (1829).
9. "dragg'd" (1831).
- 1831 has a comma at the end of the line.
10. driven—"driv'n" (1831).—Apparently Nesace is such a Hamadryad in "Al Aaraaf," driven to seek shelter in that star.
12. "The gentle Naiad from her fountain flood?" (1831).
13. "The elfin from the green grass? and from me" (1831).
14. "beneath the shrubbery" (1831). The tamarind, which lifts the line from common-  
place into magic, is a purely "literary" tree, so far as Poe's experience is concerned.
2. Nicéan—  
Poe probably picked up this musical adjective from the Latin poetry of Catullus. See J. J. Jones,  
"Poe's 'Nicéan Barks,'" *American Literature*, Vol. II, pp. 433-38.
7. hyacinth—"Hyacinthine" is  
a Homeric epithet for hair, apparently meaning "golden." But in "Ligeia" (p. 701, line 33) Poe  
makes it mean "raven-black."
9. "To the beauty of fair Greece," (1831).
10. "And the grandeur  
of old Rome." (1831).
11. "Lo! in that little window-niche" (1831).
13. "The golden scroll within  
thy hand—" (1831).
14. "A Psyche form . . ." (1831).
15. "Holy land!" (1831).
- 5-7. In 1831  
this passage was simply "And the giddy stars are mute."

Tottering above In her highest noon, The enamoured moon		With the fervour of thy lute— Well may the stars be mute!	
Blushes with love, While, to listen, the red levin (With the rapid Pleiads, even, Which were seven) Pauses in Heaven.	10	Yes, Heaven is thine; but this Is a world of sweets and sour; Our flowers are merely—flowers, And the shadow of thy perfect bliss Is the sunshine of ours.	40
And they say (the starry choir And the other listening things) That Israfeli's fire Is owing to that lyre By which he sits and sings— The trembling living wire Of those unusual strings.	15	If I could dwell Where Israfel Hath dwelt, and he where I, He might not sing so wildly well A mortal melody, While a bolder note than this might swell From my lyre within the sky.	45
But the skies that angel trod, Where deep thoughts are a duty— Where Love's a grown-up God— Where the Houri glances are Imbued with all the beauty Which we worship in a star.	20		
	25	THE CITY IN THE SEA	
Therefore thou art not wrong, Israfeli, who despisest An unimpassioned song; To thee the laurels belong, Best bard, because the wisest! Merrily live, and long!	30	In the 1831 volume this poem was called "The Doomed City," ran to fifty-eight lines, and was divided into six stanzaic divisions. There are, in addition, many important textual variations.	
The ecstasies above With thy burning measures suit— Thy grief, thy joy, thy hate, thy love,	35	Lo! Death has reared himself a throne In a strange city lying alone Far down within the dim West, Where the good and the bad and the worst and the best Have gone to their eternal rest.	5

12. levin—lightning, rapid flame. 13-14. These do not appear in 1831. Why Poe refers to the Pleiads as rapid does not appear. They were seven sisters, according to myth, one of whom became invisible through shame at having had intercourse with a mortal. Poe's reference, of course, is to the constellation named after them. 17. "And all the listening things" (1831). 20-21. These lines do not appear in 1831. 22. Of—"With" (1831). 23. skies—"Heavens" (1831). 25. "Where Love is a grown god—" (1831). 26. 1831 omits "the." After line 26, 1831 inserted the line: "—Stay! turn thine eyes afar!" 28. a—1831 reads "yon." 29. "Thou are not, therefore, wrong" (1831). 33. "Best bard,—because the wisest." (1831). The following line is omitted in the earlier version. 35. ecstasies—"extacies" (1831). 37. "Thy grief—if any—thy love" (1831). 40. thine;—"thine:" (1831). 41. 1831 ends this line with a colon. 43. 1831 omits "perfect." 45-51. "If I did dwell where Israfel

Hath dwelt, and he where I,  
He could not sing one half as well—  
One half as passionately,  
And a stormier note than this would swell  
From my lyre within the sky." (1831)

1. has—"hath rear'd" (1831). 2. lying—"all" (1831). 3. West—"west" (1831). 4. Where—"And" (1831).

There shrines and palaces and towers  
 (Time-eaten towers that tremble not!)  
 Resemble nothing that is ours.  
 Around, by lifting winds forgot,  
 Resignedly beneath the sky  
 The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy heaven come down  
 On the long night-time of that town;  
 But light from out the lurid sea  
 Streams up the turrets silently—  
 Gleams up the pinnacles far and free—  
 Up domes—up spires—up kingly halls—  
 Up fanes—up Babylon-like walls—  
 Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers  
 Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers—  
 Up many and many a marvellous shrine  
 Whose wreathéd friezes intertwine  
 The viol, the violet, and the vine.  
 Resignedly beneath the sky  
 The melancholy waters lie.  
 So blend the turrets and shadows there  
 That all seem pendulous in air,

While from a proud tower in the town  
 Death looks gigantically down.

10 There open fanes and gaping graves 30  
 Yawn level with the luminous waves;  
 But not the riches there that lie  
 In each idol's diamond eye—  
 Not the gaily-jewelled dead 35  
 Tempt the waters from their bed;  
 For no ripples curl, alas!  
 Along that wilderness of glass—  
 No swellings tell that winds may be  
 Upon some far-off happier sea—  
 No heavings hint that winds have been 40  
 On seas less hideously serene.  
 20 But lo, a stir is in the air!  
 The wave—there is a movement there!  
 As if the towers had thrust aside,  
 In slightly sinking, the dull tide— 45  
 As if their tops had feebly given  
 25 A void within the filmy Heaven.  
 The waves have now a redder glow—  
 The hours are breathing faint and low—

6. In 1831, a new stanzaic division was made here, and in place of the present lines 6-8 Poe wrote:

"There shrines, and palaces, and towers  
 Are—not like any thing of ours—  
 O! no—O! no—*ours* never loom  
 To heaven with that ungodly gloom!  
 Time-eaten towers that tremble not!"

10. Between these two divisions of the poem, Poe inserted in 1831 the following section:

"A heaven that God doth not condemn  
 With stars is like a diadem—  
 We liken our ladies' eyes to them—  
 But there! that everlasting pall!  
 It would be mockery to call  
 Such dreariness a heaven at all."

12. "Yet tho' no holy rays come down" (1831). 13. *town*;—"town," (1831). 14. "Light from the lurid, deep sea" (1831). 16. Omitted in 1831. 17-23. This passage originally read:

"Up thrones—up long-forgotten bowers  
 Of sculptur'd ivy and stone flowers—  
 Up domes—up spires—up kingly halls—  
 Up fanes—up Babylon-like walls—  
 Up many a melancholy shrine  
 Whose entablatures intertwine  
 The mask—the viol—and the vine." (1831)

24-29. Added in 1845. 30. "There open temples—open graves" (1831). 31. "Are on a level with the waves—" (1831). 33. *eye*—"eye," (1831). 35. 1831 ends this line with a colon. 38. *tell*—"hint" (1831). 39. *some*—"a" in 1831, which ends the line with a colon. 40-41. In 1831 this passage read:

"While from the high towers of the town  
 Death looks gigantically down."

43. "The wave! there is a ripple there!" (1831). 44. *thrust*—"thrown" (1831). 46. "As if the turret-tops had given" (1831). 47. "A vacuum in the filmy heaven:" (1831). 49. "The very hours are breathing low—" (1831).

And when, amid no earthly moans, 50  
Down, down that town shall settle hence,  
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,  
Shall do it reverence.

## THE SLEEPER

"The Sleeper" appears as "Irene" in the 1831 volume, where it has roughly the same length as the final version. But the 1845 version is so radically revised from the earlier volume as to be to all intents a new poem. Hence the variations will not be given here. The present text is that of the *Raven* volume (1845).

At midnight, in the month of June,  
I stand beneath the mystic moon.  
An opiate vapour, dewy, dim,  
Exhales from out her golden rim,  
And, softly dripping, drop by drop, 5  
Upon the quiet mountain-top,  
Steals drowsily and musically  
Into the universal valley.  
The rosemary nods upon the grave;  
The lily lolls upon the wave; 10  
Wrapping the fog about its breast,  
The ruin moulders into rest;  
Looking like Lethe, see! the lake  
A conscious slumber seems to take,  
And would not, for the world, awake. 15  
All Beauty sleeps!—and lo! where lies  
(Her casement open to the skies)  
Irene, with her Destinies!

O lady bright! can it be right—  
This window open to the night? 20  
The wanton airs, from the tree-top,  
Laughingly through the lattice drop—

The bodiless airs, a wizzard rout,  
Flit through thy chamber in and out,  
And wave the curtain canopy 25  
So fitfully—so fearfully—  
Above the closed and fringed lid  
'Neath which thy slumb'ring soul lies hid,  
That, o'er the floor and down the wall,  
Like ghosts the shadows rise and fall! 30  
O lady dear, hast thou no fear?  
Why and what art thou dreaming here?  
Sure thou art come o'er far-off seas,  
A wonder to these garden trees!  
Strange is thy pallor! strange thy dress! 35  
Strange, above all, thy length of tress,  
And this all solemn silentness!

The lady sleeps! Oh, may her sleep,  
Which is enduring, so be deep!  
Heaven have her in its sacred keep! 40  
This chamber changed for one more holy,  
This bed for one more melancholy,  
I pray to God that she may lie  
Forever with unopened eye,  
While the dim sheeted ghosts go by! 45

My love, she sleeps! Oh, may her sleep,  
As it is lasting, so be deep!  
Soft may the worms about her creep! 10  
Far in the forest, dim and old,  
For her may some tall vault unfold— 50  
Some vault that oft hath flung its black  
And winged panels fluttering back,  
Triumphant, o'er the crested palls,  
Of her grand family funerals—  
Some sepulchre, remote, alone, 55  
Against whose portal she hath thrown,  
In childhood, many an idle stone—  
Some tomb from out whose sounding door  
She ne'er shall force an echo more,  
Thrilling to think, poor child of sin! 60  
It was the dead who groaned within!

53. The original ending ran:

"Shall do it reverence,  
And Death to some more happy clime  
Shall give his undivided time."

3. vapour—The unpoetic basis of Poe's poem is the superstition that moonlight and night air have a blasting and deadly effect upon sleepers exposed to them. 13. Lethe—The waters of Lethe, the river of forgetfulness, were supposed to be black. 18. Irene—a trisyllable. 27. fringed—two syllables. 41. one more holy—that is, the family burial vault. 49 ff. "The vault described at the end of *The Sleeper* . . . recalls almost literally some of the great family tombs on the plantations about Charleston, with the semi-feudal pomp that surrounds them." (Allen)

## LENORE

"Lenore" originally began existence in the 1831 volume as "A Paean," the long lines of "Lenore" being broken in two, and the poem having the form of quatrains. The internal rimes of the last version are not found in 1831. To discover the changes made by Poe in reaching the final version, the student may compare lines 20-21 of "Lenore" with the last stanza of "A Paean":

"Therefore, to thee this night  
I will no requiem raise,  
But waft thee on thy flight,  
With a Paean of old days."

A version in the *Pioneer*, February, 1843, is in elaborate, irregular stanzaic form, which Poe abandoned for no good apparent reason. The present text is that of the 1845 volume. Poe later (1849) rearranged the text slightly.

Ah, broken is the golden bowl! the spirit  
flown forever!  
Let the bell toll!—a saintly soul floats on the  
Stygian river;  
And, Guy De Vere, hast *thou* no tear?—weep  
now or never more!  
See! on yon drear and rigid bier low lies thy  
love, Lenore!  
Come! let the burial rite be read—the funeral  
song be sung!— 5  
An anthem for the queenliest dead that ever  
died so young—  
A dirge for her the doubly dead in that she  
died so young.

"Wretches! ye loved her for her wealth and  
hated her for her pride,  
And when she fell in feeble health, ye blessed  
her—that she died!  
How *shall* the ritual, then, be read—the  
requiem how be sung 10  
By you—by yours, the evil eye,—by yours,  
the slanderous tongue

That did to death the innocence that died,  
and died so young?"

*Peccavimus*; but rave not thus! and let a  
Sabbath song  
Go up to God so solemnly the dead may feel  
no wrong!  
The sweet Lenore hath "gone before," with  
Hope, that flew beside,  
Leaving thee wild for the dear child that  
should have been thy bride—  
For her, the fair and *debonair*, that now so  
lowly lies,  
The life upon her yellow hair but not within  
her eyes—  
The life still there, upon her hair—the death  
upon her eyes.

"Avaunt! to-night my heart is light. No dirge  
will I upraise, 20  
"But waft the angel on her flight with a  
Paean of old days!  
"Let *no* bell toll, then,—lest her soul, amid its  
hallowed mirth,  
"Should catch the note, as it doth float—up  
from the damnèd Earth!  
"To friends above, from fiends below, the  
indignant ghost is riven—  
"From Hell unto a high estate far up within  
the Heaven— 25  
"From grief and groan, to a golden throne,  
beside the King of Heaven.[""]

## THE COLISEUM

"The Coliseum" was submitted in 1833 for the prize offered by the Baltimore *Saturday Visitor* for the best short poem sent in, but as his "Tales of the Folio Club" won the prize for the best tale in prose, the judges ruled out "The Coliseum," which was, however, published in the columns of that paper in 1833. After appearing in various magazines (like all of Poe's poems), it finally came to

1. *golden bowl*—Cf. Eccles. 12: 6. 2. *Stygian*—The river Styx is supposed to divide the underworld from the world of the living, and Charon ferries the souls of the dead across it. 9. *blessed*—that is, cursed—a euphemism still common in parts of the South. 11. *evil eye*—probably with some reference to the superstition that persons possessing the evil eye are able to blast their victims with a look. 13. *Peccavimus*—We have sinned. 17. *debonair*—probably used here in the obsolete sense of *meek*, *kindly*. 21. *Paean*—here, a song of gratitude for deliverance.

rest in *The Raven* volume (1845), the text of which is here followed. Poe intended to work this poem into his (unfinished) blank verse drama, "Politian" (first published 1835-36).

Type of the antique Rome! Rich reliquary  
Of lofty contemplation left to Time  
By buried centuries of pomp and power!  
At length—at length—after so many days  
Of weary pilgrimage and burning thirst 5  
(Thirst for the springs of lore that in thee lie,)

I kneel, an altered and an humble man,  
Amid thy shadows, and so drink within  
My very soul thy grandeur, gloom, and glory!

Vastness! and Age! and Memories of Eld!  
Silence! and Desolation! and dim Night! 11  
I feel ye now—I feel ye in your strength—  
O spells more sure than e'er Judæan king  
Taught in the gardens of Gethsemane! 14  
O charms more potent than the rapt Chaldee  
Ever drew down from out the quiet stars!  
Here, where a hero fell, a column falls!  
Here, where the mimic eagle glared in gold,

A midnight vigil holds the swarthy bat!  
Here, where the dames of Rome their gilded hair 20  
Waved to the wind, now wave the reed and thistle!

Here, where on golden throne the monarch lolled,  
Glides, spectre-like, unto his marble home,  
Lit by the wan light of the hornèd moon,  
The swift and silent lizard of the stones! 25

But stay! these walls—these ivy-clad arcades—

These mouldering plinths—these sad and blackened shafts—

These vague entablatures—this crumbling frieze—

These shattered cornices—this wreck—this ruin—

These stones—alas! these gray stones—are they all— 30

All of the famed, and the colossal left  
By the corrosive Hours to Fate and me?

"Not all"—the Echoes answer me—"not all!  
Prophetic sounds and loud, arise forever  
From us, and from all Ruin, unto the wise,  
As melody from Memnon to the Sun. 36  
We rule the hearts of mightiest men—we rule  
With a despotic sway all giant minds.  
We are not impotent—we pallid stones.  
Not all our power is gone—not all our fame—  
Not all the magic of our high renown— 41  
Not all the wonder that encircles us—  
Not all the mysteries that in us lie—  
Not all the memories that hang upon  
And cling around about us as a garment, 45  
Clothing us in a robe of more than glory."

## TO ONE IN PARADISE

This poem originally appeared without title in *Godey's Lady's Book* as part of the story originally entitled "The Visionary," January, 1834, a tale which became "The Assignation." Poe included it under the present title in his 1845 volume, the text of which is here followed.

Thou wast all that to me, love,  
For which my soul did pine—  
A green isle in the sea, love,  
A fountain and a shrine,  
All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers, 5  
And all the flowers were mine.  
Ah, dream too bright to last!

Ah, starry Hope! that didst arise  
But to be overcast!  
A voice from out the Future cries, 10

13. *Judæan king*—Christ. 15. *Chaldee*—The Chaldeans long enjoyed a reputation as astrologers and wizards. 18. *mimic eagle*—The eagle was carried by the Roman legion as modern regiments carry the regimental flag. 19. *bat* is the subject, *vigil* the object of the verb. 20. *gilded hair*—Fashionable Roman ladies wore gilt wigs. 26. *arcades*—The arches supporting the external walls of the Colosseum formed tiers of arcades. 27-29. Poe's description follows exactly the architectural order. The plinth is the base of the shaft, or column, which in turn supports the entablature, divided into three parts, the architrave, the frieze, and the cornice. 36. *Memnon*—Colossal statues of Memnon on the Nile River were supposed to give forth a musical note at sunrise.

"On! on!"—but o'er the Past  
(Dim gulf!) my spirit hovering lies  
Mute, motionless, aghast!

For, alas! alas! with me  
The light of Life is o'er!  
No more—no more—no more—  
(Such language holds the solemn sea  
To the sands upon the shore)

Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,  
Or the stricken eagle soar!

20

And all my days are trances,  
And all my nightly dreams  
15 Are where thy dark eye glances,  
And where thy footstep gleams—  
In what ethereal dances,  
25 By what eternal streams.

## LIGEIA

And the will therein lieth, which dieth not. Who knoweth the mysteries of the will, with its vigor? For God is but a great will pervading all things by nature of its intentness. Man doth not yield himself to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.\*

JOSEPH GLANVILL.

"Ligeia" was first printed in the *American Museum*, September, 1838, after which it was gathered into *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, the text of which is (with certain exceptions as noted) followed here. A slightly expanded text, following upon the appearance of the tale in the *Broadway Journal*, was gathered into the Griswold edition of the *Works*, variant readings from which are here noted by (G). Poe had previously in "Berenice" made a kind of preparatory study for "Ligeia," the earlier story first appearing in the *Southern Literary Messenger* for March, 1835. In "Berenice" the return of the dead woman depends upon the lover's recognition of her teeth, a fact which helps to account for Poe's emphasis upon the "bright line of pearly teeth" appearing in the dead woman. By comparing the Griswold readings in the footnotes with the 1840 text the student may watch Poe in the revision of one of his most famous stories. Minor changes in capitalization and punctuation are not noted.

I CANNOT, for my soul, remember how, when, or even precisely where, I first became acquainted with the Lady Ligeia. Long years have since elapsed, and my memory is feeble through much suffering. Or, perhaps, I cannot  
now bring these points to mind, because, in truth, the character of my beloved,  
5 her rare learning, her singular yet placid cast of beauty, and the thrilling and  
enthraling eloquence of her low, musical language, made their way into my  
heart by paces so steadily and stealthily progressive that they have been un-  
noticed and unknown. Yet I believe that I met her first and most frequently in  
some large, old, decaying city near the Rhine. Of her family—I have surely  
10 heard her speak—that it is of a remotely ancient date cannot be doubted.  
Ligeia! Buried in studies of a nature more than all else adapted to deaden  
impressions of the outward world, it is by that sweet word alone—by Ligeia—  
that I bring before mine eyes in fancy the image of her who is no more. And  
now, while I write, a recollection flashes upon me that I have *never known*

\* And the will . . . —The supposed quotation from Joseph Glanvill (1636-1680) is apparently Poe's invention. 9. city near the Rhine—The Rhineland became, in the romantic movement, a region in which literary marvels might conveniently be placed 11. Ligeia—"Ligeia! Ligeia!" (G).

the paternal name of her who was my friend and my betrothed, and who became the partner of my studies, and finally the wife of my bosom. Was it a playful charge on the part of my Ligeia? or was it a test of my strength of affection that I should institute no inquiries upon this point? or was it rather a caprice of my own—a wildly romantic offering on the shrine of the most passionate devotion? I but indistinctly recall the fact itself—what wonder that I have utterly forgotten the circumstances which originated or attended it? And, indeed, if ever that spirit which is entitled *Romance*—if ever she, the wan and the misty-winged *Ashtophet* of idolatrous Egypt, presided, as they tell, over marriages ill-omened, then most surely she presided over mine.

There is one dear topic, however, on which my memory fails me not. It is the person of Ligeia. In stature she was tall, somewhat slender, and in her latter days, even emaciated. I would in vain attempt to portray the majesty, the quiet ease, of her demeanor, or the incomprehensible lightness and elasticity of her footfall. She came and departed like a shadow. I was never made aware of her entrance into my closed study, save by the dear music of her low sweet voice, as she placed her delicate hand upon my shoulder. In beauty of face no maiden ever equalled her. It was the radiance of an opium dream—an airy and spirit-lifting vision more wildly divine than the fantasies which hovered about the slumbering souls of the daughters of Delos. Yet her features were not of that regular mould which we have been falsely taught to worship in the classical labors of the heathen. "There is no exquisite beauty," says Bacon, Lord Verulam, speaking truly of all the forms and *genera* of beauty, "without some *strangeness* in the proportions." Yet, although I saw that the features of Ligeia were not of a classic regularity, although I perceived that her loveliness was indeed "exquisite," and felt that there was much of "strangeness" pervading it, yet I have tried in vain to detect the irregularity, and to trace home my own perception of "the strange." I examined the contour of the lofty and pale forehead—it was faultless—how cold indeed that word when applied to a majesty so divine!—the skin rivalling the purest ivory, the commanding extent and repose, the gentle prominence of the regions above the temples, and then the raven-black, the glossy, the luxuriant and naturally-curling tresses, setting forth the full force of the Homeric epithet, "hyacinthine!" I looked at the delicate outlines of the nose—and nowhere but in the graceful medallions of the Hebrews had I beheld a similar perfection. There was the same luxurious smoothness of surface, the same scarcely perceptible tendency to the aquiline, the same harmoniously curved nostrils speaking the free spirit. I regarded the sweet

9. *Ashtophet*—Apparently Poe has vaguely in mind Ashtoreth, or Ashtaroth, a form of Astarte, goddess of fertility among the Babylonians and other oriental groups. 12. *person*—"person" (G). 15. *like*—"as" (G). 20. *daughters of Delos*—The reference is obscure, and Poe may have merely been attracted by the alliteration. Greek maidens sometimes made offerings in the temple of Artemis on the island of Delos. 22. *exquisite*—"There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion." Bacon's *Essays* (1625), "Of Beauty." 23. *Verulam*—"Verulam" (G), throughout. 24. *proportions*—"proportion" (G). 28. *contour*—Poe's description of Ligeia, including the emphasis upon her low voice and musical diction, owes much to phrenology. Cf. Edward Hungerford, "Poe and Phrenology," *American Literature*, Vol. II, pp. 209 ff., especially pp. 228-31. It is important to note that "the gentle prominence of the regions above the temples," denoting "Love of Life" according to the phrenological charts, points to the dénouement of the story. Cf. lines 27-30, page 703. 34-35. *medallions of the Hebrews*—Poe has vaguely in mind the Roman representations of the Jews. 35. *was*—"were" (G).



- mouth. Here was indeed the triumph of all things heavenly—the magnificent turn of the short upper lip—the soft, voluptuous slumber of the under—the dimples which sported, and the color which spoke—the teeth glancing back, with a brilliancy almost startling, every ray of the holy light which fell upon
- 5 them in her serene, and placid, yet most exultingly radiant of all smiles. I scrutinized the formation of the chin—and here, too, I found the gentleness of breadth, the softness and the majesty, the fulness and the spirituality, of the Greek,—the contour which the god Apollo revealed but in a dream, to Cleomenes, the son of the Athenian. And then I peered into the large eyes of Ligeia.
- 10 For eyes we have no models in the remotely antique. It might have been, too, that in these eyes of my beloved lay the secret to which Lord Verulam alludes. They were, I must believe, far larger than the ordinary eyes of our race. They were even far fuller than the fullest of the Gazelle eyes of the tribe of the valley of Nourjahad. Yet it was only at intervals—in moments of intense
- 15 excitement—that this peculiarity became more than slightly noticeable in Ligeia. And at such moments was her beauty—in my heated fancy thus it appeared perhaps—the beauty of beings either above or apart from the earth—the beauty of the fabulous Houri of the Turk. The color of the orbs was the most brilliant of black, and far over them hung jetty lashes of great length. The
- 20 brows, slightly irregular in outline, had the same hue. The “strangeness,” however, which I found in the eyes was of a nature distinct from the formation, or the color, or the brilliancy of the features, and must, after all, be referred to the *expression*. Ah, word of no meaning! behind whose vast latitude of mere sound we intrench our ignorance of so much of the spiritual. The expression of
- 25 the eyes of Ligeia! How, for long hours have I pondered upon it! How have I, through the whole of a midsummer night, struggled to fathom it! What was it—that something more profound than the well of Democritus—which lay far within the pupils of my beloved? What *was* it? I was possessed with a passion to discover. Those eyes! those large, those shining, those divine orbs! they
- 30 became to me twin stars of Leda, and I to them devoutest of astrologers. Not for a moment was the unfathomable meaning of their glance, by day or by night, absent from my soul.

There is no point, among the many incomprehensible anomalies of the science of mind, more thrillingly exciting than the fact—never, I believe, noticed in the schools—that in our endeavors to recall to memory something long forgotten we often find ourselves *upon the very verge* of remembrance without being able, in the end, to remember. And thus how frequently, in my intense

**8. Cleomenes**—Poe's allusion seems to be largely fanciful. Cleomenes, son of Apollodorus the Athenian, was the sculptor of the Venus of Medici, and the reference in the text is to the inscription on the pedestal. But although Poe desires to compare Ligeia to the Venus as a type of Greek female beauty, there seems to be no authority for Apollo's revelation to Cleomenes. (It is possible Poe mistook “Apollodorus” for “Apollo.”) **12-13. our race**—“our own race” (G). **13-14. Gazelle eyes . . . Nourjahad**—a reference to *The History of Nourjahad* (1767), a novel by Mrs. Frances Sheridan (1724-1766). **18. Houri**—The Mohammedan heaven is inhabited by beautiful women called houris. **18. color**—“hue” (G). **20. hue**—“tint” (G). **27. well of Democritus**—Democritus of Abdera, a Greek philosopher of the fifth century B.C., who, according to Diogenes Laertius, said that truth lies in a deep well. **30. twin stars of Leda**—The two brightest stars in the constellation Gemini are named Castor and Pollux, after the two sons of Leda and Zeus. **30-32. Not . . . soul**—G. omits this sentence.

scrutiny of Ligeia's eyes, have I felt approaching the full knowledge of their expression—felt it approaching—yet not quite be mine—and so at length entirely depart. And (strange, oh strangest mystery of all!) I found, in the commonest objects of the universe, a circle of analogies to that expression. I mean to say that, subsequently to the period when Ligeia's beauty passed into my spirit, there dwelling as in a shrine, I derived, from many existences in the material world, a sentiment such as I felt always aroused within me by her large and luminous orbs. Yet not the more could I define that sentiment, or analyze, or even steadily view it. I recognized it, let me repeat, sometimes in the commonest objects of the universe. It has flashed upon me in the survey of a rapidly-growing vine—in the contemplation of a moth, a butterfly, a chrysalis, a stream of running water. I have felt it in the ocean, in the falling of a meteor. I have felt it in the glances of unusually aged people. And there are one or two stars in heaven—(one especially, a star of the sixth magnitude, double and changeable, to be found near the large star in Lyra) in a telescopic scrutiny of which I have been made aware of the feeling. I have been filled with it by certain sounds from stringed instruments, and not unfrequently by passages from books. Among innumerable other instances, I well remember something in a volume of Joseph Glanvill, which (perhaps merely from its quaintness—who shall say?) never failed to inspire me with the sentiment,—  
 “And the will therein lieth, which dieth not. Who knoweth the mysteries of the will, with its vigor? For God is but a great will pervading all things by nature of its intentness. Man doth not yield him to the angels, nor unto death utterly, but only through the weakness of his feeble will.”

Length of years, and subsequent reflection, have enabled me to trace, indeed, some remote connexion between this passage in the old English moralist and a portion of the character of Ligeia. An *intensity* in thought, action, or speech, was possibly, in her, a result, or at least an index, of that gigantic volition which, during our long intercourse, failed to give other and more immediate evidence of its existence. Of all the women whom I have ever known she, the outwardly calm, the ever-placid Ligeia, was the most violently a prey to the tumultuous vultures of stern passion. And of such passion I could form no estimate, save by the miraculous expansion of those eyes which at once so delighted and appalled me, by the almost magical melody, modulation, distinctness and placidity of her very low voice, and by the fierce energy (rendered doubly effective by contrast with her manner of utterance) of the words which she habitually uttered.

I have spoken of the learning of Ligeia: it was immense—such as I have never known in woman. In the classical tongues was she deeply proficient, and as far as my own acquaintance extended in regard to the modern dialects of Europe, I have never known her at fault. Indeed upon any theme of the most admired, because simply the most abstruse of the boasted erudition of the academy, have I *ever* found Ligeia at fault? How singularly, how thrillingly,

10. G. omits **commonest objects . . . in the . . .** 15. **Lyra**—Poe refers to a famous binary star in the constellation Lyra, known as Epsilon Lyra. 24. **but**—“save” (G). 26. **connexion**—“connection” (G); G. omits **old**. 36. **words**—“wild words” (G). 40. **dialects**—languages. 43. **academy**—learned world.

- this one point in the nature of my wife has forced itself, at this late period only, upon my attention! I said her knowledge was such as I had never known in woman. Where breathes the man who, like her, has traversed, and successfully, *all* the wide areas of moral, natural, and mathematical science? I saw
- 5 not then what I now clearly perceive, that the acquisitions of Ligeia were gigantic, were astounding—yet I was sufficiently aware of her infinite supremacy to resign myself, with a child-like confidence, to her guidance through the chaotic world of metaphysical investigation at which I was most busily occupied during the earlier years of our marriage. With how vast a triumph—
- 10 with how vivid a delight—with how much of all that is ethereal in hope—did I *feel*, as she bent over me in studies but little sought for—but less known—that delicious vista by slow but perceptible degrees expanding before me, down whose long, gorgeous, and all untrodden path, I might at length pass onward to the goal of a wisdom too divinely precious not to be forbidden!
- 15 How poignant, then, must have been the grief with which, after some years, I beheld my well-grounded expectations take wings to themselves and flee away! Without Ligeia I was but as a child groping benighted. Her presence, her readings alone, rendered vividly luminous the many mysteries of the transcendentalism in which we were immersed. Letters, lambent and golden, grew
- 20 duller than Saturnian lead, wanting the radiant lustre of her eyes. And now those eyes shone less and less frequently upon the pages over which I pored. Ligeia grew ill. The wild eyes blazed with a too—too glorious effulgence; the pale fingers became of the transparent waxen hue of the grave—and the blue veins upon the lofty forehead swelled and sunk impetuously with the tides of
- 25 the most gentle emotion. I saw that she must die—and I struggled desperately in spirit with the grim Azrael. And the struggles of the passionate wife were, to my astonishment, even more energetic than my own. There had been much in her stern nature to impress me with the belief that, to her, death would have come without its terrors—but not so. Words are impotent to convey any just
- 30 idea of the fierceness of resistance with which she wrestled with the dark shadow. I groaned in anguish at the pitiable spectacle. I would have soothed—I would have reasoned; but in the intensity of her wild desire for life—for life—but for life, solace and reason were alike the uttermost of folly. Yet not for an instant, amid the most convulsive writhings of her fierce spirit, was shaken
- 35 the external placidity of her demeanor. Her voice grew more gentle—grew more low—yet I would not wish to dwell upon the wild meaning of the quietly-uttered words. My brain reeled as I hearkened entranced, to a melody more than mortal—to assumptions and aspirations which mortality had never before known.
- 40 That she loved me, I should not have doubted; and I might have been easily aware that, in a bosom such as hers, love would have reigned no ordi-

2. had—"have" (G). 3. Where—"but where" (G). 4. natural—"physical" (G). 11. sought for—"sought" (G). 12. slow but perceptible—"slow" (G). 12. degrees—"degree" (G). 14. wisdom . . . forbidden—*Cf.* Gen. 3:5-6. 16. flee—"fly" (G). *Cf.* Prov. 23:5. 18. transcendentalism—metaphysical speculation. 19. Letters—G. begins the sentence with "Wanting the radiant lustre of her eyes." 24. sunk—"sank" (G). 26. Azrael—the Hebrew angel of death. 29. terrors—*Cf.* Ps. 45:4. 30-31 dark shadow—"Shadow" (G). *Cf.* Isa. 9:2. 33-34. not . . . instant—"until the last instance" (G).

nary passion. But in death only, was I fully impressed with the strength of her affection. For long hours, detaining my hand, would she pour out before me the overflowing of a heart whose more than passionate devotion amounted to idolatry. How had I deserved to be so blessed by such confessions?—how had I deserved to be so cursed with the removal of my beloved in the hour of her making them? But upon this subject I cannot bear to dilate. Let me say only, that in Ligeia's more than womanly abandonment to a love, alas! all unmerited, all unworthily bestowed, I at length recognized the principle of her longing with so wildly earnest a desire for the life which was now fleeing so rapidly away. It is this wild longing—it is this eager vehemence of desire for life—but for life—that I have no power to portray—no utterance capable of expressing. 5 10

[At high noon of the night in which she departed, beckoning me, peremptorily, to her side, she bade me repeat certain verses composed by herself not many days before. I obeyed her. They were these: 15

Lo! 'tis a gala night  
 Within the lonesome latter years!  
 An angel throng, bewinged, bedight  
 In veils, and drowned in tears,  
 Sit in a theatre, to see  
 A play of hopes and fears, 20  
 While the orchestra breathes fitfully  
 The music of the spheres.

Mimes, in the form of God on high,  
 Mutter and mumble low, 25  
 And hither and thither fly;  
 Mere puppets they, who come and go  
 At bidding of vast formless things  
 That shift the scenery to and fro,  
 Flapping from out their condor wings  
 Invisible Wo! 30

That motley drama!—oh, be sure  
 It shall not be forgot!  
 With its Phantom chased for evermore,  
 By a crowd that seize it not, 35  
 Through a circle that ever returneth in  
 To the self-same spot;  
 And much of Madness, and more of Sin  
 And horror, the soul of the plot!

13 ff. The passage in brackets, beginning *At high noon of the night*, appears only in G. In 1840 this read only: "Methinks I again behold the terrific struggles of her lofty, her nearly idealized nature, with the might and the terror, and the majesty, of the great Shadow. But she perished. The giant *will* succumbed to a power more stern. And I thought, as I gazed upon the corpse, of the wild passage in Joseph Glanville: 'The will therein lieth, which dieth not. Who knoweth the mysteries of the will, with its vigor? For God is but a great will pervading all things by nature of its intentness. Man doth not yield him to the angels, *nor unto death utterly*, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.'" 16. *Lo! 'tis*—The poem originally appeared in *Graham's Magazine* for January, 1843, as "The Conqueror Worm," and was not united with "Ligeia" until the appearance of the story in the *Broadway Journal*.

- But see, amid the mimic rout  
 A crawling shape intrude!  
 A blood-red thing that writhes from out  
 The scenic solitude!
- 5 It writhes!—it writhes!—with mortal pangs  
 The mimes become its food,  
 And seraphs sob at vermin fangs  
 In human gore imbued.
- 10 Out—out are the lights—out all!  
 And over each quivering form,  
 The curtain, a funeral pall,  
 Comes down with the rush of a storm—  
 While the angels, all pallid and wan,  
 Uprising, unveiling, affirm
- 15 That the play is the tragedy, “Man,”  
 And its hero the Conqueror Worm.

- “O God!” half shrieked Ligeia, leaping to her feet and extending her arms aloft with a spasmodic movement, as I made an end of these lines—“O God! O Divine Father!—shall these things be undeviatingly so?—shall this conqueror
- 20 be not once conquered? Are we not part and parcel in Thee? Who—who knoweth the mysteries of the will with its vigor? Man doth not yield him to the angels, *nor unto death utterly*, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.”

- And now, as if exhausted with emotion, she suffered her white arms to
- 25 fall, and returned solemnly to her bed of death. And as she breathed her last sighs, there came mingled with them a low murmur from her lips. I bent to them my ear and distinguished, again, the concluding words of the passage in Glanvill:—“*Man doth not yield him to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.*”]
- 30 She died—and I, crushed into the very dust with sorrow, could no longer endure the lonely desolation of my dwelling in the dim and decaying city by the Rhine. I had no lack of what the world terms wealth—Ligeia had brought me far more, very far more, than ordinarily falls to the lot of mortals. After a few months, therefore, of weary and aimless wandering, I purchased, and put
- 35 in some repair, an abbey, which I shall not name, in one of the wildest and least frequented portions of fair England. The gloomy and dreary grandeur of the building, the almost savage aspect of the domain, the many melancholy and time-honored memories connected with both, had much in unison with the feelings of utter abandonment which had driven me into that remote
- 40 and unsocial region of the country. Yet although the external abbey, with its verdant decay hanging about it, suffered but little alteration, I gave way, with a child-like perversity, and perchance with a faint hope of alleviating my sorrows, to a display of more than regal magnificence within. For such follies even in childhood I had imbibed a taste, and now they came back to me as if
- 45 in the dotage of grief. Alas, I feel how much even of incipient madness might

1. *mimic rout*—masqued dance. 32. *terms*—“calls” (G).

have been discovered in the gorgeous and fantastic draperies, in the solemn carvings of Egypt, in the wild cornices and furniture, in the bedlam patterns of the carpets of tufted gold! I had become a bounden slave in the trammels of opium, and my labors and my orders had taken a coloring from my dreams. But these absurdities I must not pause to detail. Let me speak only of that one chamber, ever accursed, whither, in a moment of mental alienation, I led from the altar as my bride—as the successor of the unforgotten Ligeia—the fair-haired and blue-eyed Lady Rowena Trevanion, of Tremaine. 5

There is no individual portion of the architecture and decoration of that bridal chamber which is not now visibly before me. Where were the souls of the haughty family of the bride, when, through thirst of gold, they permitted to pass the threshold of an apartment *so* bedecked, a maiden and a daughter so beloved? I have said that I minutely remember the details of the chamber—yet I am sadly forgetful on topics of deep moment—and here there was no system, no keeping, in the fantastic display, to take hold upon the memory. 10 The room lay in a high turret of the castellated abbey, was pentagonal in shape, and of capacious size. Occupying the whole southern face of the pentagon was the sole window—an immense sheet of unbroken glass from Venice—a single pane, and tinted of a leaden hue, so that the rays of either the sun or moon, passing through it, fell with a ghastly lustre upon the objects within. 20 Over the upper portion of this huge window, extended the trellice-work of an aged vine, which clambered up the massy walls of the turret. The ceiling, of gloomy-looking oak, was excessively lofty, vaulted, and elaborately fretted with the wildest and most grotesque specimens of a semi-Gothic, semi-Druidical device. From out the most central recess of this melancholy vaulting, depended; 25 by a single chain of gold, with long links, a huge censer of the same metal, Saracenic in pattern, and with many perforations so contrived that there writhed in and out of them, as if endued with a serpent vitality, a continual succession of parti-colored fires. Some few ottomans and golden candelabra of Eastern figure were in various stations about—and there was the couch, too, 30 the bridal couch, of an Indian model, and low, and sculptured of solid ebony, with a canopy above. In each of the angles of the chamber, stood on end a gigantic sarcophagus of black granite, from the tombs of the kings over against Luxor, with their aged lids full of immemorial sculpture. But in the draping of the apartment lay, alas! the chief fantasy of all. The lofty walls— 35 gigantic in height—even unproportionably so, were hung from summit to foot, in vast folds, with a heavy and massive-looking tapestry—tapestry of a material which was found alike as a carpet on the floor, as a covering for the ottomans and the ebony bed, as a canopy for the bed, and as the gorgeous volutes of the curtains which partially shaded the window. The material was 40

2. carvings of Egypt—Interest in things Egyptian, following upon the deciphering of the Rosetta Stone (1802), and the publication of important work in Egyptology in the eighteen-twenties by Champollion, was manifested by the romantic writers. 2. bedlam—insane. 20. upon—"on" (G). 21. trellice—"trellis" (G). 24. Gothic . . . Druidical—Adjectives much used by romantic writers without precise meaning. The device was a pattern suggesting "northern antiquities." 27. Saracenic—Here, about equivalent to oriental, with a strong suggestion of barbaric. 29. Some few ottomans—G. begins a new paragraph. 31. Indian—Hindu, but the word is purposely vague. 32. canopy—"pall-like canopy" (G). 34. Luxor—Luxor, near Thebes, a great center of Egyptian archaeological research.

the richest cloth of gold. It was spotted all over, at irregular intervals, with arabesque figures, about a foot in diameter, and wrought upon the cloth in patterns of the most jetty black. But these figures partook of the true character of the arabesque only when regarded from a single point of view. By a contrivance now common, and indeed traceable to a very remote period of antiquity, they were made changeable in aspect. To one entering the room they bore the appearance of simple monstrosities; but upon a farther advance, this appearance gradually departed; and, step by step, as the visiter moved his station in the chamber, he saw himself surrounded by an endless succession of the ghastly forms which belong to the superstition of the Northman, or arise in the guilty slumbers of the monk. The phantasmagoric effect was vastly heightened by the artificial introduction of a strong continual current of wind behind the draperies—giving a hideous and uneasy animation to the whole.

In halls such as these—in a bridal chamber such as this—I passed, with the Lady of Tremaine, the unhallowed hours of the first month of our marriage—passed them with but little disquietude. That my wife dreaded the fierce moodiness of my temper—that she shunned me, and loved me but little—I could not help perceiving—but it gave me rather pleasure than otherwise. I loathed her with a hatred belonging more to demon than to man. My memory flew back, (oh, with what intensity of regret!) to Ligeia, the beloved, the beautiful, the entombed. I revelled in recollections of her purity, of her wisdom, of her lofty, her ethereal nature, of her passionate, her idolatrous love. Now, then, did my spirit fully and freely burn with more than all the fires of her own. In the excitement of my opium dreams (for I was habitually fettered in the iron shackles of the drug) I would call aloud upon her name, during the silence of the night, or among the sheltered recesses of the glens by day, as if, through the wild eagerness, the solemn passion, the consuming ardor of my longing for the departed Ligeia I could restore the departed Ligeia to the pathway she had abandoned upon the earth.

About the commencement of the second month of the marriage, the Lady Rowena was attacked with sudden illness from which her recovery was slow. The fever which consumed her rendered her nights uneasy, and, in her perturbed state of half-slumber, she spoke of sounds, and of motions, in and about the chamber of the turret, which had no origin save in the distemper of her fancy, or, perhaps, in the phantastic influences of the chamber itself. She became at length convalescent—finally well. Yet but a brief period elapsed, ere a second more violent disorder again threw her upon a bed of suffering—and from this attack her frame, at all times feeble, never altogether recovered. Her illnesses were, after this epoch, of alarming character, and of more alarming recurrence, defying alike the knowledge and the great exertions of her medical men. With the increase of the chronic disease, which had thus, apparently, taken too sure hold upon her constitution to be eradicated by human

10. Northman—"Norman" (G). 20-21. beloved . . . the beautiful—"the beloved, the august, the beautiful" (G). 25. iron shackles—"shackles" (G). 28. G. omits the first Ligeia. For the second the departed Ligeia G. reads "her." 29. Between abandoned and upon G. inserts: "—ah, could it be for ever?" 34. which had—"which I concluded had" (G). 35. phantastic—"phantasmagoric" (G). 41. medical men—"physicians" (G).

means, I could not fail to observe a similar increase in the nervous irritation of her temperament, and in her excitability by trivial causes of fear. Indeed reason seemed fast tottering from her throne. She spoke again, and now more frequently and pertinaciously, of the sounds, of the slight sounds, and of the unusual motions among the tapestries, to which she had formerly alluded.

One night, near the closing in of September, she pressed this distressing subject with more than usual emphasis upon my attention. She had just awakened from an unquiet slumber, and I had been watching, with feelings half of anxiety, half of vague terror, the workings of her emaciated countenance. I sat by the side of her ebony bed, upon one of the ottomans of India. She partly arose, and spoke, in an earnest low whisper, of sounds which she *then* heard, but which I could not hear, of motions which she *then* saw, but which I could not perceive. The wind was rushing hurriedly behind the tapestries, and I wished to show her (what, let me confess it, I could not *all* believe) that those faint, almost inarticulate breathings, and the very gentle variations of the figures upon the wall, were but the natural effects of that customary rushing of the wind. But a deadly pallor, overspreading her face, had proved to me that my exertions to reassure her would be fruitless. She appeared to be fainting, and no attendants were within call. I remembered where was deposited a decanter of light wine which had been ordered by her physicians, and hastened across the chamber to procure it. But, as I stepped beneath the light of the censer, two circumstances of a startling nature attracted my attention. I had felt that some palpable object had passed lightly by my person; and I saw that there lay a faint, indefinite shadow upon the golden carpet, in the very middle of the rich lustre thrown from the censer. But I was wild with the excitement of an immoderate dose of opium, and heeded these things but little, nor spoke of them to Rowena. Having found the wine, I recrossed the chamber, and poured out a gobletful, which I held to the lips of the fainting lady. She had now partially recovered, however, and took, herself, the vessel, while I sank upon an ottoman near me, with my eyes rivetted upon her person. It was then that I became distinctly aware of a gentle foot-fall upon the carpet, and near the couch; and, in a second thereafter, as Rowena was in the act of raising the wine to her lips, I saw, or may have dreamed that I saw, fall within the goblet, as if from some invisible spring in the atmosphere of the room, three or four large drops of a brilliant and ruby-colored fluid. If this I saw—not so Rowena. She swallowed the wine unhesitatingly, and I forbore to speak to her of a circumstance which must, after all, I considered, have been but the suggestion of a vivid imagination, rendered morbidly active by the terror of the lady, by the opium, and by the hour.

Yet—I cannot conceal it from myself—after this period, a rapid change for the worst took place in the disorder of my wife; so that, on the third subsequent night, the hands of her menials prepared her for the tomb, and on the

2. After fear, G. omits the following sentence. 15. faint—G. omits, but adds "those" after and. 23. palpable—"palpable although invisible" (G). 24.—After lay G. omits a faint, indefinite shadow. 25. censer—G. adds: "a shadow—a faint, indefinite shadow of angelic aspect—such as might be fancied for the shadow of a shade." 29. took, herself, the vessel—"took the vessel herself" (G). 30. rivetted—"fastened" (G). 40. from myself . . . period—"from my own perception that, immediately subsequent to the fall of the ruby-drops," (G).



fourth, I sat alone, with her shrouded body, in that fantastic chamber which had received her as my bride. Wild visions, opium-engendered, flitted shadow-like before me. I gazed with unquiet eye upon the sarcophagi in the angles of the room, upon the varying figures of the drapery, and upon the writhing  
 5 of the parti-colored fires in the censer overhead. My eyes then fell, as I called to mind the circumstances of a former night, to the spot beneath the glare of the censer where I had seen the faint traces of the shadow. It was there, how ever, no longer, and breathing with greater freedom, I turned my glances to the pallid and rigid figure upon the bed. Then rushed upon me a thousand  
 10 memories of Ligeia—and then came back upon my heart, with the turbulent violence of a flood, the whole of that unutterable woe with which I had regarded *her* thus enshrouded. The night waned; and still, with a bosom full of bitter thoughts of the one only and supremely beloved, I remained gazing upon the body of Rowena.

15 It might have been midnight, or perhaps earlier, or later, for I had taken no note of time, when a sob, low, gentle, but very distinct, startled me from my reverie. I *felt* that it came from the bed of ebony—the bed of death. I listened in an agony of superstitious terror—but there was no repetition of the sound; I strained my vision to detect any motion in the corpse, but there was  
 20 not the slightest perceptible. Yet I could not have been deceived. I *had* heard the noise, however faint, and my soul was awakened within me, as I resolutely and perseveringly kept my attention rivetted upon the body. Many minutes elapsed before any circumstance occurred tending to throw light upon the mystery. At length it became evident that a slight, a very faint, and barely  
 25 noticeable tinge of color had flushed up within the cheeks, and along the sunken small veins of the eyelids. Through a species of unutterable horror and awe, for which the language of mortality has no sufficiently energetic expression, I felt my brain reel, my heart cease to beat, my limbs grow rigid where I sat. Yet a sense of duty finally operated to restore my self-possession. I could  
 30 no longer doubt that we had been precipitate in our preparations for interment—that Rowena still lived. It was necessary that some immediate exertion be made; yet the turret was altogether apart from the portion of the abbey tenanted by the servants—there were none within call,—I had no means of summoning them to my aid without leaving the room for many minutes—and  
 35 this I could not venture to do. I therefore struggled alone in my endeavors to call back the spirit still hovering. In a short period it was certain, however, that a relapse had taken place; the color disappeared from both eyelid and cheek, leaving a wanness even more than that of marble; the lips became doubly shrivelled and pinched up in the ghastly expression of death; a re-  
 40 pulsive clamminess and coldness overspread rapidly the surface of the body; and all the usual rigorous stiffness immediately supervened. I fell back with a shudder upon the couch from which I had been so startlingly aroused, and again gave myself up to passionate waking visions of Ligeia.

An hour thus elapsed when, (could it be possible?) I was a second time

21. within me, as I—"within me. I" (G). 22. rivetted—"riveted" (G). 24. faint—"feeble" (G). 28. brain reel—G. omits. 30. for interment—G. omits. 41. rigorous stiffness—rigor mortis.

aware of some vague sound issuing from the region of the bed. I listened—in extremity of horror. The sound came again—it was a sigh. Rushing to the corpse, I saw—distinctly saw—a tremor upon the lips. In a minute after, they slightly relaxed, disclosing a bright line of the pearly teeth. Amazement now struggled in my bosom with the profound awe which had hitherto reigned therein alone. I felt that my vision grew dim, that my reason wandered, and it was only by a convulsive effort that I at length succeeded in nerving myself to the task which duty thus, once more, had pointed out. There was now a partial glow upon the forehead and upon the cheek and throat—a perceptible warmth pervaded the whole frame—there was even a slight pulsation at the heart. The lady lived; and with redoubled ardor I betook myself to the task of restoration. I chafed and bathed the temples and the hands, and used every exertion which experience, and no little medical reading, could suggest. But in vain. Suddenly, the color fled, the pulsation ceased, the lips resumed the expression of the dead, and, in an instant afterwards, the whole body took upon itself the icy chilliness, the livid hue, the intense rigidity, the sunken outline, and each and all of the loathsome peculiarities of that which has been, for many days, a tenant of the tomb.

And again I sunk into visions of Ligeia—and again, (what marvel that I shudder while I write?) *again* there reached my ears a low sob from the region of the ebony bed. But why shall I minutely detail the unspeakable horrors of that night? Why shall I pause to relate how, time after time, until near the period of the gray dawn, this hideous drama of revivification was repeated, and how each terrific relapse was only into a sterner and apparently more irredeemable death; [how each agony wore the aspect of a struggle with some invisible foe; and how each struggle was succeeded by I know not what of wild change in the personal appearance of the corpse?] Let me hurry to a conclusion.

The greater part of the fearful night had worn away, and the corpse of Rowena once again stirred—and now more vigorously than hitherto, although arousing from a dissolution more appalling in its utter hopelessness than any. I had long ceased to struggle or to move, and remained sitting rigidly upon the ottoman, a helpless prey to a whirl of violent emotions, of which extreme awe was perhaps the least terrible, the least consuming. The corpse, I repeat, stirred, and now more vigorously than before. The hues of life flushed up with unwonted energy into the countenance—the limbs relaxed—and, save that the eyelids were yet pressed heavily together, and that the bandages and draperies of the grave still imparted their charnel character to the figure, I might have dreamed that Rowena had indeed shaken off, utterly, the fetters of Death. But if this idea was not, even then, altogether adopted, I could, at least, doubt no longer, when, arising from the bed, tottering, with feeble steps, with closed eyes, and with the manner of one bewildered in a dream, the Lady of Tremaine advanced boldly and palpably into the middle of the apartment.

I trembled not—I stirred not—for a crowd of unutterable fancies connected

3-4. minute . . . relaxed—"minute afterwards they relaxed" (G). 6. therein—"there" (G). 7. convulsive—"violent" (G). 11. lived—"lived" (G). 15. afterwards—"afterward" (G). 17. each and all—"all" (G). 23. and—G. omits. 25. The passage in brackets beginning how each agony is found only in G. 28-29. the corpse of Rowena—"she who had been dead" (G). 41. Lady of Tremaine—"thing that was enshrouded" (G).

with the air, the demeanor of the figure, rushing hurriedly through my brain, had paralyzed, had chilled me into stone. I stirred not—but gazed upon the apparition. There was a mad disorder in my thoughts—a tumult unappeasable. Could it, indeed, be the *living* Rowena who confronted me? [Could it indeed  
 5 be Rowena *at all*—the fair-haired, the blue-eyed Lady Rowena Trevanion of Tremaine?] Why, *why*, should I doubt it? The bandage lay heavily about the mouth—but then it was the mouth of the breathing Lady of Tremaine. And the cheeks—there were the roses as in her noon of life—yes, these were indeed the fair cheeks of the living Lady of Tremaine. And the chin, with its dimples,  
 10 as in health, was it not hers?—but *had she then grown taller since her malady*? What inexpressible madness seized me with that thought? One bound, and I had reached her feet! Shrinking from my touch, she let fall from her head, unloosened, the ghastly cerements which had confined it, and there streamed forth, into the rushing atmosphere of the chamber, huge masses of long and  
 15 dishevelled hair. *It was blacker than the raven wings of the midnight!* And now the eyes opened of the figure which stood before me. “Here then, at least,” I shrieked aloud, “can I never—can I never be mistaken—these are the full, and the black, and the wild eyes—of the lady—of the Lady Ligeia!”

## THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

Son cœur \* est un luth suspendu;  
 Sitôt qu'on le touche il résonne.

DE BERANGER

“The Fall of the House of Usher” first appeared in *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*, September, 1839, after which it was gathered into the *Tales* of 1840. With certain changes of text, it then appeared in the *Tales* of 1845, from which the present text is taken. Variant readings from the 1840 edition are so noted.

20 **D**URING the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country; and at length found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher. I know not how it was—but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded  
 25 my spirit. I say insufferable; for the feeling was unrelieved by any of that half-pleasurable, because poetic, sentiment with which the mind usually receives even the sternest natural images of the desolate or terrible. I looked upon

1. *air*—After *air*, G. inserts “the stature.” 4-6. The passage in brackets is found only in G. 7. *it was . . . mouth*—“might it not be the mouth” (G). 8. *were indeed*—“might indeed be” (G). 10. *was . . . hers*—“might it not be hers” (G). 15. *hair*. It—“hair; *it*” (G). 16. *the eyes*—“slowly opened the eyes” (G). 17-18. G. reads: “the full, and the black, and the wild eyes—of my lost love—of the lady—of the LADY LIGEIA.” \* *Son cœur*—The verse quotation does not appear in 1840. Pierre Jean de Béranger (1780-1857) was a writer of popular songs and Anacreontic verse, and the couplet is from his poem “Le refus.” The passage means: “His heart is a suspended lute; as soon as it is touched, it resounds.” 23. *House of Usher*—“The house of Usher, itself, may well be some old, crumbling, and cracked-wall colonial mansion found mouldering in the Carolina woods, as it was left desolate by the hands of the marauding British, surrounded by its swamps and gloomy woods, its cypress-stained tarns, and its snake-haunted Indian moats.” (Allen)

the scene before me—upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain—upon the bleak walls—upon the vacant eye-like windows—upon a few rank sedges—and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees—with an utter depression of soul which I can compare to no earthly sensation more properly than to the after-dream of the reveller upon opium—the bitter lapse into everyday life—the hideous dropping off of the veil. There was an iciness, a sinking, a sickening of the heart—an unredeemed dreariness of thought which no goading of the imagination could torture into aught of the sublime. What was it—I paused to think—what was it that so unnerved me in the contemplation of the House of Usher? It was a mystery all insoluble; nor could I grapple with the shadowy fancies that crowded upon me as I pondered. I was forced to fall back upon the unsatisfactory conclusion, that while, beyond doubt, there *are* combinations of very simple natural objects which have the power of thus affecting us, still the analysis of this power lies among considerations beyond our depth. It was possible, I reflected, that a mere different arrangement of the particulars of the scene, of the details of the picture, would be sufficient to modify, or perhaps to annihilate its capacity for sorrowful impression; and, acting upon this idea, I reined my horse to the precipitous brink of a black and lurid tarn that lay in unruffled lustre by the dwelling, and gazed down—but with a shudder even more thrilling than before—upon the remodelled and inverted images of the gray sedge, and the ghastly tree-stems, and the vacant and eye-like windows.

Nevertheless, in this mansion of gloom I now proposed to myself a sojourn of some weeks. Its proprietor, Roderick Usher, had been one of my boon companions in boyhood; but many years had elapsed since our last meeting. A letter, however, had lately reached me in a distant part of the country—a letter from him—which, in its wildly importunate nature, had admitted of no other than a personal reply. The MS. gave evidence of nervous agitation. The writer spoke of acute bodily illness—of a mental disorder which oppressed him—and of an earnest desire to see me, as his best and indeed his only personal friend, with a view of attempting, by the cheerfulness of my society, some alleviation of his malady. It was the manner in which all this, and much more, was said—it was the apparent *heart* that went with his request—which allowed me no room for hesitation; and I accordingly obeyed forthwith what I still considered a very singular summons.

Although, as boys, we had been even intimate associates, yet I really knew little of my friend. His reserve had been always excessive and habitual. I was aware, however, that his very ancient family had been noted, time out of mind, for a peculiar sensibility of temperament, displaying itself, through long ages, in many works of exalted art, and manifested, of late, in repeated deeds of munificent yet unobtrusive charity, as well as in a passionate devotion to the intricacies, perhaps even more than to the orthodox and easily recognizable beauties, of musical science. I had learned, too, the very remarkable fact, that the stem of the Usher race, all time-honored as it was, had put forth at no period, any enduring branch; in other words, that the entire family lay in the direct line of descent, and had always, with very trifling and very temporary variation, so lain. It was this deficiency, I considered, while running over in

- thought the perfect keeping of the character of the premises with the accreted character of the people, and while speculating upon the possible influence which the one, in the long lapse of centuries, might have exercised upon the other—it was this deficiency, perhaps, of collateral issue, and the consequent
- 5 undeviating transmission, from sire to son of the patrimony with the name, which had, at length, so identified the two as to merge the original title of the estate in the quaint and equivocal appellation of the “House of Usher”—an appellation which seemed to include, in the minds of the peasantry who used it, both the family and the family mansion.
- 10 I have said that the sole effect of my somewhat childish experiment—that of looking down within the tarn—had been to deepen the first singular impression. There can be no doubt that the consciousness of the rapid increase of my superstition—for why should I not so term it?—served mainly to accelerate the increase itself. Such, I have long known, is the paradoxical law of all
- 15 sentiments having terror as a basis. And it might have been for this reason only, that, when I again uplifted my eyes to the house itself, from its image in the pool, there grew in my mind a strange fancy—a fancy so ridiculous, indeed, that I but mention it to show the vivid force of the sensations which oppressed me. I had so worked upon my imagination as really to believe that about the
- 20 whole mansion and domain there hung an atmosphere peculiar to themselves and their immediate vicinity—an atmosphere which had no affinity with the air of heaven, but which had reeked up from the decayed trees, and the gray wall, and the silent tarn—a pestilent and mystic vapor, dull, sluggish, faintly discernible, and leaden-hued.
- 25 Shaking off from my spirit what *must* have been a dream, I scanned more narrowly the real aspect of the building. Its principal feature seemed to be that of an excessive antiquity. The discoloration of ages had been great. Minute fungi overspread the whole exterior, hanging in a fine tangled web-work from the eaves. Yet all this was apart from any extraordinary dilapidation. No
- 30 portion of the masonry had fallen; and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts, and the crumbling condition of the individual stones. In this there was much that reminded me of the specious totality of old wood-work which has rotted for long years in some neglected vault, with no disturbance from the breath of the external air. Beyond this indication of extensive decay, however, the fabric gave little token of instability. Perhaps the eye of a scrutinizing observer might have discovered a barely perceptible fissure, which, extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became lost in the sullen
- 35 waters of the tarn.
- 40 Noticing these things, I rode over a short causeway to the house. A servant in waiting took my horse, and I entered the Gothic archway of the hall. A valet, of stealthy step, thence conducted me, in silence, through many dark and intricate passages in my progress to the *studio* of his master. Much that I en-

10-11. *experiment* . . . *tarn*—“experiment, of looking down within the tarn,” (1840).  
 19. *about*—“around about” (1840). 23-24. *tarn* . . . *leaden-hued*—“tarn, in the form of an inelastic vapor or gas—dull, sluggish, faintly discernible, and leaden-hued” (1840). There is no paragraph break in 1840. 41. *Gothic*—Here, as elsewhere, the adjective is used for atmospheric effect. 43. *studio*—not italicized in 1840.

countered on the way contributed, I know not how, to heighten the vague sentiments of which I have already spoken. While the objects around me—while the carvings of the ceilings, the sombre tapestries of the walls, the ebon blackness of the floors, and the phantasmagoric armorial trophies which rattled as I strode, were but matters to which, or to such as which, I have been accustomed from my infancy—while I hesitated not to acknowledge how familiar was all this—I still wondered to find how unfamiliar were the fancies which ordinary images were stirring up. On one of the staircases, I met the physician of the family. His countenance, I thought, wore a mingled expression of low cunning and perplexity. He accosted me with trepidation and passed on. The valet now threw open a door and ushered me into the presence of his master. 5 10

The room in which I found myself was very large and lofty. The windows were long, narrow, and pointed, and at so vast a distance from the black oaken floor as to be altogether inaccessible from within. Feeble gleams of en-crimsoned light made their way through the trellised panes, and served to render sufficiently distinct the more prominent objects around; the eye, however, struggled in vain to reach the remoter angles of the chamber, or the recesses of the vaulted and fretted ceiling. Dark draperies hung upon the walls. The general furniture was profuse, comfortless, antique, and tattered. Many books and musical instruments lay scattered about, but failed to give any vitality to the scene. I felt that I breathed an atmosphere of sorrow. An air of stern, deep, and irredeemable gloom hung over and pervaded all. 15 20

Upon my entrance, Usher arose from a sofa on which he had been lying at full length, and greeted me with a vivacious warmth which had much in it, I at first thought, of an overdone cordiality—of the constrained effort of the *ennuyé* man of the world. A glance, however, at his countenance, convinced me of his perfect sincerity. We sat down; and for some moments, while he spoke not, I gazed upon him with a feeling half of pity, half of awe. Surely, man had never before so terribly altered, in so brief a period, as had Roderick Usher! It was with difficulty that I could bring myself to admit the identity of the wan being before me with the companion of my early boyhood. Yet the character of his face had been at all times remarkable. A cadaverousness of complexion; an eye large, liquid, and luminous beyond comparison; lips somewhat thin and very pallid, but of a surpassingly beautiful curve; a nose of a delicate Hebrew model, but with a breadth of nostril unusual in similar formations; a finely moulded chin, speaking, in its want of prominence, of a want of moral energy; hair of a more than web-like softness and tenuity; these features, with an inordinate expansion above the regions of the temple, made up altogether a countenance not easily to be forgotten. And now in the mere exaggeration of the prevailing character of these features, and of the expression they were wont to convey, lay so much of change that I doubted to whom I spoke. The now ghastly pallor of the skin, and the now miraculous lustre of 25 30 35 40

12. large and lofty—"large and excessively lofty" (1840). 15. trellised—"trelliced" (1840). 23. on—"upon" (1840). 26. ennuyé—bored. 32. character of his face—"The description of Roderick Usher is the most perfect pen-portrait of Poe himself which is known." (Allen) At the same time Usher's character has been determined by the supposed laws of phrenological description. See Edward Hungerford, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-27. 38. inordinate expansion—indicating "ideality," according to phrenology. Cf. p. 701, lines 30-31.

the eye, above all things startled and even awed me. The silken hair, too, had been suffered to grow all unheeded, and as, in its wild gossamer texture, it floated rather than fell about the face, I could not, even with effort, connect its Arabesque expression with any idea of simple humanity.

- 5 In the manner of my friend I was at once struck with an incoherence—an inconsistency; and I soon found this to arise from a series of feeble and futile struggles to overcome an habitual trepidancy—an excessive nervous agitation. For something of this nature I had indeed been prepared, no less by his letter, than by reminiscences of certain boyish traits, and by conclusions deduced from  
10 his peculiar physical conformation and temperament. His action was alternately vivacious and sullen. His voice varied rapidly from a tremulous indecision (when the animal spirits seemed utterly in abeyance) to that species of energetic concision—that abrupt, weighty, unhurried, and hollow-sounding enunciation—that leaden, self-balanced and perfectly modulated guttural utter-  
15 ance, which may be observed in the lost drunkard, or the irreclaimable eater of opium, during the periods of his most intense excitement.

It was thus that he spoke of the object of my visit, of his earnest desire to see me, and of the solace he expected me to afford him. He entered, at some length, into what he conceived to be the nature of his malady. It was, he said, a constitutional and a family evil, and one for which he despaired to find a remedy—  
20 a mere nervous affection, he immediately added, which would undoubtedly soon pass off. It displayed itself in a host of unnatural sensations. Some of these, as he detailed them, interested and bewildered me; although, perhaps, the terms, and the general manner of the narration had their weight. He suffered much from a morbid acuteness of the senses; the most insipid food was  
25 alone endurable; he could wear only garments of certain texture; the odors of all flowers were oppressive; his eyes were tortured by even a faint light; and there were but peculiar sounds, and these from stringed instruments, which did not inspire him with horror.

- 30 To an anomalous species of terror I found him a bounden slave. "I shall perish," said he, "I *must* perish in this deplorable folly. Thus, thus, and not otherwise, shall I be lost. I dread the events of the future, not in themselves, but in their results. I shudder at the thought of any, even the most trivial, incident, which may operate upon this intolerable agitation of soul. I have, indeed,  
35 no abhorrence of danger, except in its absolute effect—in terror. In this unnerved—in this pitiable condition—I feel that the period will sooner or later arrive when I must abandon life and reason together, in some struggle with the grim phantasm, FEAR."

I learned, moreover, at intervals, and through broken and equivocal hints,  
40 another singular feature of his mental condition. He was enchained by certain superstitious impressions in regard to the dwelling which he tenanted, and

4. Arabesque—"arabesque" (1840). 7. trepidancy—trepidation. 1840 follows this with a comma. 9. conclusions—presumably a hint as to the phrenological correctness of the delineation. 13. concision—conciseness. 15. observed—In 1840 the paragraph concludes "which may be observed in the moments of intense excitement of the lost drunkard, or the irreclaimable eater of opium." 21. affection—complaint, illness. 23. me;—"me—" (1840). 36. feel—In 1840 this paragraph concludes "I feel that I must inevitably abandon life and reason together in my struggles with some fatal demon of fear."

whence, for many years, he had never ventured forth—in regard to an influence whose supposititious force was conveyed in terms too shadowy here to be re-stated—an influence which some peculiarities in the mere form and substance of his family mansion, had, by dint of long sufferance, he said, obtained over his spirit—an effect which the *physique* of the gray walls and turrets, and of the dim tarn into which they all looked down, had, at length, brought about upon the *morale* of his existence. 5

He admitted, however, although with hesitation, that much of the peculiar gloom which thus afflicted him could be traced to a more natural and far more palpable origin—to the severe and long-continued illness—indeed to the evidently approaching dissolution—of a tenderly beloved sister—his sole companion for long years—his last and only relative on earth. “Her decease,” he said, with a bitterness which I can never forget, “would leave him (him the hopeless and the frail) the last of the ancient race of the Ushers.” While he spoke, the lady Madeline (for so was she called) passed slowly through a remote portion of the apartment, and, without having noticed my presence, disappeared. I regarded her with an utter astonishment not unmingled with dread—and yet I found it impossible to account for such feelings. A sensation of stupor oppressed me, as my eyes followed her retreating steps. When a door, at length, closed upon her, my glance sought instinctively and eagerly the countenance of the brother—but he had buried his face in his hands, and I could only perceive that a far more than ordinary wanness had overspread the emaciated fingers through which trickled many passionate tears. 10 15 20

The disease of the lady Madeline had long baffled the skill of her physicians. A settled apathy, a gradual wasting away of the person, and frequent although transient affections of a partially cataleptical character, were the unusual diagnosis. Hitherto she had steadily borne up against the pressure of her malady, and had not betaken herself finally to bed; but, on the closing in of the evening of my arrival at the house, she succumbed (as her brother told me at night with inexpressible agitation) to the prostrating power of the destroyer; and I learned that the glimpse I had obtained of her person would thus probably be the last I should obtain—that the lady, at least while living, would be seen by me no more. 25 30

For several days ensuing, her name was unmentioned by either Usher or myself: and during this period I was busied in earnest endeavors to alleviate the melancholy of my friend. We painted and read together; or I listened, as if in a dream, to the wild improvisations of his speaking guitar. And thus, as a closer and still closer intimacy admitted me more unreservedly into the recesses of his spirit, the more bitterly did I perceive the futility of all attempt at cheering a mind from which darkness, as if an inherent positive quality, poured forth upon all objects of the moral and physical universe, in one unceasing radiation of gloom. 35 4

1. whence—“from which” (1840). 11. sister— —“sister;” (1840). 14. While—“As” (1840). 18. and yet . . . feelings—1840 reads “dread. Her figure, her air, her features—all, in their very minutest development were those—were identically (I can use no other sufficient term,) were identically those of the Roderick Usher who sat beside me.” 18. sensation—“feeling” (1840). 19. When—“As” (1840). 20. her—“her exit” (1840). 29-30. The passage set off by parentheses is in 1840 set off by commas. 30. destroyer;—“destroyer—” (1840). 35. myself:—“myself;” (1840). 36. together;—“together—” (1840).



- I shall ever bear about me a memory of the many solemn hours I thus spent alone with the master of the House of Usher. Yet I should fail in any attempt to convey an idea of the exact character of the studies, or of the occupations, in which he involved me, or led me the way. An excited and highly dis-
- 5 tempered ideality threw a sulphureous lustre over all. His long improvised dirges will ring forever in my ears. Among other things, I hold painfully in mind a certain singular perversion and amplification of the wild air of the last waltz of Von Weber. From the paintings over which his elaborate fancy brooded, and which grew, touch by touch, into vaguenesses at which I shud-
- 10 dered the more thrillingly, because I shuddered knowing not why;—from these paintings (vivid as their images now are before me) I would in vain endeavor to educe more than a small portion which should lie within the compass of merely written words. By the utter simplicity, by the nakedness of his designs, he arrested and overawed attention. If ever mortal painted an idea, that mortal
- 15 was Roderick Usher. For me at least, in the circumstances then surrounding me, there arose out of the pure abstractions which the hypochondriac contrived to throw upon his canvas, an intensity of intolerable awe, no shadow of which felt I ever yet in the contemplation of the certainly glowing yet too concrete reveries of Fuseli.
- 20 One of the phantasmagoric conceptions of my friend, partaking not so rigidly of the spirit of abstraction, may be shadowed forth, although feebly, in words. A small picture presented the interior of an immensely long and rectangular vault or tunnel, with low walls, smooth, white, and without interruption or device. Certain accessory points of the design served well to convey
- 25 the idea that this excavation lay at an exceeding depth below the surface of the earth. No outlet was observed in any portion of its vast extent, and no torch, or other artificial source of light was discernible; yet a flood of intense rays rolled throughout, and bathed the whole in a ghastly and inappropriate splendor.
- 30 I have just spoken of that morbid condition of the auditory nerve which rendered all music intolerable to the sufferer, with the exception of certain effects of stringed instruments. It was, perhaps, the narrow limits to which he thus confined himself upon the guitar, which gave birth, in great measure, to the fantastic character of his performances. But the fervid *facility* of his
- 35 *impromptus* could not be so accounted for. They must have been, and were, in the notes, as well as in the words of his wild fantasias (for he not unfrequently accompanied himself with rhymed verbal improvisations), the result of that intense mental collectedness and concentration to which I have previously alluded as observable only in particular moments of the highest artificial
- 40 excitement. The words of one of these rhapsodies I have easily remembered. I was, perhaps, the more forcibly impressed with it, as he gave it, because, in

5. sulphureous—"sulphurous" (1840). 6. hold—"bear" (1840). 8. Von Weber—Karl Maria von Weber (1786-1826), one of the greatest musicians of the romantic school. The so-called "Last Waltz of Von Weber" is really by Karl Gottlieb Reissiger (1798-1859)—No. 5 of *Danses brillantes* (1822). 10. why;— "why," (1840). 15. least,—"least—" (1840). 16. me,— "me —" (1840). 19. Fuseli—Henry Fuseli (Füssly; 1741-1825), eccentric painter, illustrator of Shakespeare, and famous for his picture "The Nightmare." 27. discernible;—"discernible—" (1840). 35. *impromptus*—not italicized in 1840. 40. remembered—"borne away in memory" (1840).

the under or mystic current of its meaning, I fancied that I perceived, and for the first time, a full consciousness on the part of Usher, of the tottering of his lofty reason upon her throne. The verses, which were entitled "The Haunted Palace," ran very nearly, if not accurately, thus:—

## I

In the greenest of our valleys,	5
By good angels tenanted,	
Once a fair and stately palace—	
Radiant palace—reared its head.	
In the monarch Thought's dominion—	
It stood there!	10
Never seraph spread a pinion	
Over fabric half so fair.	

## II

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,	
On its roof did float and flow;	
(This—all this—was in the olden	15
Time long ago)	
And every gentle air that dallied,	
In that sweet day,	
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,	
A winged odor went away.	20

## III

Wanderers in that happy valley	
Through two luminous windows saw	
Spirits moving musically	
To a lute's well-tuned law,	
Round about a throne, where sitting	25
(Porphyrogene!)	
In state his glory well befitting,	
The ruler of the realm was seen.	

## IV

And all with pearl and ruby glowing	
Was the fair palace door,	30
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing	
And sparkling evermore,	
A troop of Echoes whose sweet duty	
Was but to sing,	
In voices of surpassing beauty,	35
The wit and wisdom of their king.	

## V

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,  
Assailed the monarch's high estate;

4. "The Haunted Palace" first appeared in the *Baltimore American Museum*, April, 1839.  
8. Radiant—"Snow-white" (1840). 26. Porphyrogene—born to the purple; imperially born.

5

(Ah, let us mourn, for never morrow  
 Shall dawn upon him, desolate!)  
 And, round about his home, the glory  
 That blushed and bloomed  
 Is but a dim-remembered story  
 Of the old time entombed.

## VI

10

And travellers now within that valley,  
 Through the red-litten windows, see  
 Vast forms that move fantastically  
 To a discordant melody;  
 While, like a rapid ghastly river,  
 Through the pale door,  
 A hideous throng rush out forever,  
 And laugh—but smile no more.

- 15 I well remember that suggestions arising from this ballad, led us into a train of thought wherein there became manifest an opinion of Usher's which I mention not so much on account of its novelty, (for other men have thought thus,) as on account of the pertinacity with which he maintained it. This opinion, in its general form, was that of the sentience of all vegetable things. But, in his  
 20 disordered fancy, the idea had assumed a more daring character, and trespassed, under certain conditions, upon the kingdom of inorganization. I lack words to express the full extent, or the earnest *abandon* of his persuasion. The belief, however, was connected (as I have previously hinted) with the gray stones of the home of his forefathers. The conditions of the sentience had been  
 25 here, he imagined, fulfilled in the method of collocation of these stones—in the order of their arrangement, as well as in that of the many *fungi* which overspread them, and of the decayed trees which stood around—above all, in the long undisturbed endurance of this arrangement, and in its reduplication in the still waters of the tarn. Its evidence—the evidence of the sentience—  
 30 was to be seen, he said, (and I here started as he spoke,) in the gradual yet certain condensation of an atmosphere of their own about the waters and the walls. The result was discoverable, he added, in that silent, yet importunate and terrible influence which for centuries had moulded the destinies of his family, and which made *him* what I now saw him—what he was. Such opinions need  
 35 no comment, and I will make none.

Our books—the books which, for years, had formed no small portion of the

17. *other men*—"Watson, Dr. Percival, Spallanzani, and especially the Bishop of Landaff.—See 'Chemical Essays,' Vol. V." (Poe's note) 26. *fungi*—not italicized in 1840. 30-32. *the gradual . . . walls*—1840 prints this passage in italics. 36. *books*—Usher's library is notable for its fantastic qualities, but it is nevertheless amazing to see the author assemble titles from such far-fetched sources. Jean-Baptiste-Louis Gresset (1709-1777) wrote *Vert-Vert* (1734) and *La Char treuse*, anticlerical and licentious poems. Niccoló Machiavelli (1469-1527) wrote, among other things, a satiric antifeminist novel, *Belfagor Arcidiavolo*. Emmanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), Swedish mystic, published his *Heaven and Hell* in Latin in 1758. *The Subterranean Voyage of Nicholas Klimm* was published in Latin in 1741 by Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754). Robert Fludd (1574-1637) published in Latin *Clavis philosophiae et alchymae Fluddanae* (1633). Joannes Indagine published *Chiromantia* in 1531. Marin Cureau de la Chambre (1594-1669) published *Discours sur les principes*

mental existence of the invalid—were, as might be supposed, in strict keeping with this character of phantasm. We pored together over such works as the Ververt and Chartreuse of Gresset; the Belphegor of Machiavelli; the Heaven and Hell of Swedenborg; the Subterranean Voyage of Nicholas Klimm by Holberg; the Chiromancy of Robert Flud, of Jean D'Indaginé, and of De la Chambre; the Journey into the Blue Distance of Tieck; and the City of the Sun of Campanella. One favorite volume was a small octavo edition of the *Directorium Inquisitorum*, by the Dominican Eymeric de Gironne; and there were passages in Pomponius Mela, about the old African Satyrs and Oegipans, over which Usher would sit dreaming for hours. His chief delight, however, was found in the perusal of an exceedingly rare and curious book in quarto Gothic—the manual of a forgotten church—the *Vigiliae Mortuorum secundum Chorum Ecclesiae Maguntinae*. 5 10

I could not help thinking of the wild ritual of this work, and of its probable influence upon the hypochondriac, when, one evening, having informed me abruptly that the lady Madeline was no more, he stated his intention of preserving her corpse for a fortnight, (previously to its final interment,) in one of the numerous vaults within the main walls of the building. The worldly reason, however, assigned for this singular proceeding, was one which I did not feel at liberty to dispute. The brother had been led to his resolution (so he told me) by consideration of the unusual character of the malady of the deceased, of certain obtrusive and eager inquiries on the part of her medical men, and of the remote and exposed situation of the burial-ground of the family. I will not deny that when I called to mind the sinister countenance of the person whom I met upon the staircase, on the day of my arrival at the house, I had no desire to oppose what I regarded as at best but a harmless, and by no means an unnatural, precaution. 15 20 25

At the request of Usher, I personally aided him in the arrangements for the temporary entombment. The body having been encoffined, we two alone bore it to its rest. The vault in which we placed it (and which had been so long unopened that our torches, half smothered in its oppressive atmosphere, gave us little opportunity for investigation) was small, damp, and entirely without means of admission for light; lying, at great depth, immediately beneath that portion of the building in which was my own sleeping apartment. It had been used, apparently, in remote feudal times, for the worst purposes of a donjon-keep, and, in later days as a place of deposit for powder, or some other highly 30 35

*de la chiromancie* (1653). What book of Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853) Poe has in mind is not clear. Thomas Campanella (1568-1639) published *The City of the Sun* in Latin in 1643. Nicolas Eymeric de Gironne (about 1320-1399) is the author of *Directorium inquisitorum* (1503). The geography of Pomponius Mela (first century A.D.) was printed at Milan in 1471. The last title in the paragraph refers to a book of unknown date and time of publication, beginning: *Incipiunt vigilie mortuorum secundum chorū ecclesie Maguntin* [Mavence], printed (?) by Johann Schoiffer.

4. by—"de" (1840). 9. *Oegipans*—properly, Aegipan—a goat-shaped man, supposed to be found in Africa. 12. *Vigiliae*—Poe's information—however he got it—is exact. The *Vigilie* is a quarto, very rare, printed in the characters used for early Bibles. (J. G. T. Graesse, *Trésor de livres rares et précieux*, Vol. VI, p. 490 [1867]). 14. *wild ritual*—wild as it deals with a macabre subject. The ritual seems to have been standard. The title of the book means *The Watches of the Dead according to the Choir of the Church of Mainz*. 22. *inquiries*—"Body-snatching" was not uncommon in the first half of the nineteenth century. Part of the plot of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* turns upon such an episode.

combustible substance, as a portion of its floor, and the whole interior of a long archway through which we reached it, were carefully sheathed with copper. The door, of massive iron, had been, also, similarly protected. Its immense weight caused an unusually sharp grating sound, as it moved upon its hinges.

- 5 Having deposited our mournful burden upon tressels within this region of horror, we partially turned aside the yet unscrewed lid of the coffin, and looked upon the face of the tenant. A striking similitude between the brother and sister now first arrested my attention; and Usher, divining, perhaps, my thoughts, murmured out some few words from which I learned that the deceased and himself had been twins, and that sympathies of a scarcely intelligible  
10 nature had always existed between them. Our glances, however, rested not long upon the dead—for we could not regard her unawed. The disease which had thus entombed the lady in the maturity of youth, had left, as usual in all maladies of a strictly cataleptical character, the mockery of a faint blush  
15 upon the bosom and the face, and that suspiciously lingering smile upon the lip which is so terrible in death. We replaced and screwed down the lid, and, having secured the door of iron, made our way, with toil, into the scarcely less gloomy apartments of the upper portion of the house.

- And now, some days of bitter grief having elapsed, an observable change  
20 came over the features of the mental disorder of my friend. His ordinary manner had vanished. His ordinary occupations were neglected or forgotten. He roamed from chamber to chamber with hurried, unequal, and objectless step. The pallor of his countenance had assumed, if possible, a more ghastly hue—but the luminousness of his eye had utterly gone out. The once occasional  
25 huskiness of his tone was heard no more; and a tremulous quaver, as if of extreme terror, habitually characterized his utterance. There were times, indeed, when I thought his unceasingly agitated mind was laboring with some oppressive secret, to divulge which he struggled for the necessary courage. At times, again, I was obliged to resolve all into the mere inexplicable vagaries  
30 of madness, for I beheld him gazing upon vacancy for long hours, in an attitude of the profoundest attention, as if listening to some imaginary sound. It was no wonder that his condition terrified—that it infected me. I felt creeping upon me, by slow yet certain degrees, the wild influences of his own fantastic yet impressive superstitions.

- 35 It was, especially, upon retiring to bed late in the night of the seventh or eighth day after the placing of the lady Madeline within the donjon, that I experienced the full power of such feelings. Sleep came not near my couch—while the hours waned and waned away. I struggled to reason off the nervousness which had dominion over me. I endeavored to believe that much, if not  
40 all of what I felt, was due to the bewildering influence of the gloomy furniture of the room—of the dark and tattered draperies, which, tortured into motion by the breath of a rising tempest, swayed fitfully to and fro upon the walls, and rustled uneasily about the decorations of the bed. But my efforts

7-8. A striking . . . attention; and—For this phrase 1840 substitutes the sentence "The exact similitude between the brother and sister even here again startled and confounded me." 26. utterance. There—1840 separates the two sentences by a dash. 40. bewildering—"phantasmagoric" (1840).

were fruitless. An irrepressible tremor gradually pervaded my frame; and, at length, there sat upon my very heart an incubus of utterly causeless alarm. Shaking this off with a gasp and a struggle, I uplifted myself upon the pillows, and, peering earnestly within the intense darkness of the chamber, hearkened—I know not why, except that an instinctive spirit prompted me—to certain low and indefinite sounds which came, through the pauses of the storm, at long intervals, I knew not whence. Overpowered by an intense sentiment of horror, unaccountable yet unendurable, I threw on my clothes with haste (for I felt that I should sleep no more during the night), and endeavored to arouse myself from the pitiable condition into which I had fallen, by pacing rapidly to and fro through the apartment. 5 10

I had taken but few turns in this manner, when a light step on an adjoining staircase arrested my attention. I presently recognized it as that of Usher. In an instant afterward he rapped with a gentle touch at my door, and entered, bearing a lamp. His countenance was, as usual, cadaverously wan—but, moreover, there was a species of mad hilarity in his eyes—an evidently restrained *hysteria* in his whole demeanor. His air appalled me—but anything was preferable to the solitude which I had so long endured, and I even welcomed his presence as a relief. 15

“And you have not seen it?” he said abruptly, after having stared about him for some moments in silence—“you have not then seen it?—but, stay! you shall.” Thus speaking, and having carefully shaded his lamp, he hurried to one of the casements, and threw it freely open to the storm. 20

The impetuous fury of the entering gust nearly lifted us from our feet. It was, indeed, a tempestuous yet sternly beautiful night, and one wildly singular in its terror and its beauty. A whirlwind had apparently collected its force in our vicinity; for there were frequent and violent alterations in the direction of the wind; and the exceeding density of the clouds (which hung so low as to press upon the turrets of the house) did not prevent our perceiving the life-like velocity with which they flew careering from all points against each other, without passing away into the distance. I say that even their exceeding density did not prevent our perceiving this—yet we had no glimpse of the moon or stars—nor was there any flashing forth of the lightning. But the under surfaces of the huge masses of agitated vapor, as well as all terrestrial objects immediately around us, were glowing in the unnatural light of a faintly luminous and distinctly visible gaseous exhalation which hung about and enshrouded the mansion. 25 30 35

“You must not—you shall not behold this!” said I, shudderingly, to Usher, as I led him with a gentle violence, from the window to a seat. “These appearances, which bewilder you, are merely electrical phenomena not uncommon—or it may be that they have their ghastly origin in the rank miasma of the tarn. Let us close this casement;—the air is chilling and dangerous to your frame. Here is one of your favorite romances. I will read, and you shall listen;—and so we will pass away this terrible night together.” 40

9. for . . . night—1840 sets off the material in parentheses by commas. 16. moreover—1840 omits. 17. hysteria—not in italics in 1840. 23. casements—“gigantic casements” (1840).

The antique volume which I had taken up was the "Mad Trist" of Sir Launcelot Canning; but I had called it a favorite of Usher's more in sad jest than in earnest; for, in truth, there is little in its uncouth and unimaginative prolixity which could have had interest for the lofty and spiritual ideality of my friend. It was, however, the only book immediately at hand; and I indulged a vague hope that the excitement which now agitated the hypochondriac, might find relief (for the history of mental disorder is full of similar anomalies) even in the extremeness of the folly which I should read. Could I have judged, indeed, by the wild overstrained air of vivacity with which he hearkened, or apparently hearkened, to the words of the tale, I might well have congratulated myself upon the success of my design.

I had arrived at that well-known portion of the story where Ethelred, the hero of the Trist, having sought in vain for peaceable admission into the dwelling of the hermit, proceeds to make good an entrance by force. Here, it will be remembered, the words of the narrative run thus:

"And Ethelred, who was by nature of a doughty heart, and who was now mighty withal, on account of the powerfulness of the wine which he had drunken, waited no longer to hold parley with the hermit, who, in sooth, was of an obstinate and malicious turn, but, feeling the rain upon his shoulders, and fearing the rising of the tempest, uplifted his mace outright, and, with blows, made quickly room in the plankings of the door for his gauntleted hand; and now pulling therewith sturdily, he so cracked, and ripped, and tore all asunder, that the noise of the dry and hollow-sounding wood alarummed and reverberated throughout the forest."

At the termination of this sentence I started, and for a moment, paused; for it appeared to me (although I at once concluded that my excited fancy had deceived me)—it appeared to me that, from some very remote portion of the mansion, there came, indistinctly, to my ears, what might have been, in its exact similarity of character, the echo (but a stifled and dull one certainly) of the very cracking and ripping sound which Sir Launcelot had so particularly described. It was, beyond doubt, the coincidence alone which had arrested my attention; for, amid the rattling of the sashes of the casements, and the ordinary commingled noises of the still increasing storm, the sound, in itself, had nothing, surely, which should have interested or disturbed me. I continued the story:

"But the good champion Ethelred, now entering within the door, was sore enraged and amazed to perceive no signal of the malicious hermit; but, in the stead thereof, a dragon of a scaly and prodigious demeanor, and of a fiery tongue, which sate in guard before a palace of gold, with a floor of silver; and upon the wall there hung a shield of shining brass with this legend enwritten—

Who entereth herein, a conqueror hath bin;  
Who slayeth the dragon, the shield he shall win;

And Ethelred uplifted his mace, and struck upon the head of the dragon, which fell before him, and gave up his pesty breath, with a shriek so horrid and harsh, and

1. "Mad Trist"—The "antique volume" in question is apparently Poe's own fabrication.  
2. Canning;—"Canning—" (1840). 15. thus:—"thus:—" (1840). 41. win;—"win." (1840).

withal so piercing, that Ethelred had fain to close his ears with his hands against the dreadful noise of it, the like whereof was never before heard."

Here again I paused abruptly, and now with a feeling of wild amazement—for there could be no doubt whatever that, in this instance, I did actually hear (although from what direction it proceeded I found it impossible to say) a low and apparently distant, but harsh, protracted, and most unusual screaming or grating sound—the exact counterpart of what my fancy had already conjured up for the dragon's unnatural shriek as described by the romancer.

Oppressed, as I certainly was, upon the occurrence of this second and most extraordinary coincidence, by a thousand conflicting sensations, in which wonder and extreme terror were predominant, I still retained sufficient presence of mind to avoid exciting, by any observation, the sensitive nervousness of my companion. I was by no means certain that he had noticed the sounds in question; although, assuredly, a strange alteration had, during the last few minutes taken place in his demeanor. From a position fronting my own, he had gradually brought round his chair, so as to sit with his face to the door of the chamber; and thus I could but partially perceive his features, although I saw that his lips trembled as if he were murmuring inaudibly. His head had dropped upon his breast—yet I knew that he was not asleep, from the wide and rigid opening of the eye as I caught a glance of it in profile. The motion of his body, too, was at variance with this idea—for he rocked from side to side with a gentle yet constant and uniform sway. Having rapidly taken notice of all this, I resumed the narrative of Sir Launcelot, which thus proceeded:

"And now, the champion, having escaped from the terrible fury of the dragon, bethinking himself of the brazen shield, and of the breaking up of the enchantment which was upon it, removed the carcass from out of the way before him, and approached valorously over the silver pavement of the castle to where the shield was upon the wall; which in sooth tarried not for his full coming, but fell down at his feet upon the silver floor, with a mighty great and terrible ringing sound."

No sooner had these syllables passed my lips, than—as if a shield of brass had indeed, at the moment, fallen heavily upon a floor of silver—I became aware of a distinct, hollow, metallic, and clangorous yet apparently muffled reverberation. Completely unnerved, I leaped to my feet; but the measured rocking movement of Usher was undisturbed. I rushed to the chair in which he sat. His eyes were bent fixedly before him, and throughout his whole countenance there reigned a stony rigidity. But, as I placed my hand upon his shoulder, there came a strong shudder over his whole person; a sickly smile quivered about his lips; and I saw that he spoke in a low, hurried, and gibbering murmur, as if unconscious of my presence. Bending closely over him, I at length drank in the hideous import of his words.

"Not hear it?—yes, I hear it, and *have* heard it. Long—long—long—many minutes, many hours, many days, have I heard it—yet I dared not—oh, pity me, miserable wretch that I am!—I dared not—I *dared* not speak! *We have put*

23. proceeded:—"proceeded:—" (1840). 33. I leaped—"I started convulsively" (1840). 36. stony—"more than stony" (1840). 36. placed—"laid" (1840). 37. whole person—"frame" (1840).



*her living in the tomb!* Said I not that my senses were acute? I *now* tell you that I heard her first feeble movements in the hollow coffin. I heard them—many, many days ago—yet I dared not—I *dared not speak!* And now—to-night—Ethelred—ha! ha!—the breaking of the hermit's door, and the death-cry of the  
 5 dragon, and the clangor of the shield!—say, rather, the rending of her coffin, and the grating of the iron hinges of her prison, and her struggles within the coppered archway of the vault! Oh, whither shall I fly? Will she not be here anon? Is she not hurrying to upbraid me for my haste? Have I not heard her footstep on the stair? Do I not distinguish that heavy and horrible beating of  
 10 her heart? Madman!”—here he sprang furiously to his feet, and shrieked out his syllables, as if in the effort he were giving up his soul—“*Madman! I tell you that she now stands without the door!*”

As if in the superhuman energy of his utterance there had been found the potency of a spell, the huge antique pannels to which the speaker pointed, threw  
 15 slowly back, upon the instant, their ponderous and ebony jaws. It was the work of the rushing gust—but then without those doors there *did* stand the lofty and enshrouded figure of the Lady Madeline of Usher. There was blood upon her white robes, and the evidence of some bitter struggle upon every portion of her emaciated frame. For a moment she remained trembling and reeling to and  
 20 fro upon the threshold—then, with a low moaning cry, fell heavily inward upon the person of her brother, and in her violent and now final death-agonies, bore him to the floor a corpse, and a victim to the terrors he had anticipated.

From that chamber, and from that mansion, I fled aghast. The storm was  
 25 still abroad in all its wrath as I found myself crossing the old causeway. Suddenly there shot along the path a wild light, and I turned to see whence a gleam so unusual could have issued; for the vast house and its shadows were alone behind me. The radiance was that of the full, setting, and blood-red moon, which now shone vividly through that once barely-discernible fissure,  
 30 of which I have before spoken as extending from the roof of the building, in a zigzag direction, to the base. While I gazed, this fissure rapidly widened—there came a fierce breath of the whirlwind—the entire orb of the satellite burst at once upon my sight—my brain reeled as I saw the mighty walls rushing asunder—there was a long tumultuous shouting sound like the voice of a thou-  
 35 sand waters—and the deep and dank tarn at my feet closed sullenly and silently over the fragments of the “*House of Usher.*”

## THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH

This “study” in horror first appeared in *Graham's Magazine* for May, 1842, and later in the *Broadway Journal* for July 19, 1845, the text of which is here followed.

5. shield!—“shield” (1840). 5. her—“the” (1840). 6. of her prison—1840 omits. 7. whither—*Cf.* Ps. 139: 7. 10. sprang—“sprung” (1840). 11. Madman!—not in italics in 1840. 14. spell,—“spell—” (1840). 21. violent—“horrible” (1840). 22. anticipated—“dreaded” (1840). 27. issued;—“issued—” (1840). 30. spoken—“spoken,” (1840). 34-35. voice . . . waters—*Cf.* Rev. 1: 15.

It represents a type of "study" of which Poe was fond—the creation of a single episode set in a carefully wrought atmospheric effect.

THE "RED DEATH" had long devastated the country. No pestilence had ever been so fatal, or so hideous. Blood was its Avator and its seal—the redness and the horror of blood. There were sharp pains, and sudden dizziness, and then profuse bleeding at the pores, with dissolution. The scarlet stains upon the body and especially upon the face of the victim, were the pest ban which shut him out from the aid and from the sympathy of his fellow-men. And the whole seizure, progress and termination of the disease, were the incidents of half an hour.

But the Prince Prospero was happy and dauntless and sagacious. When his dominions were half depopulated, he summoned to his presence a thousand hale and light-hearted friends from among the knights and dames of his court, and with these retired to the deep seclusion of one of his castellated abbeys. This was an extensive and magnificent structure, the creation of the prince's own eccentric yet august taste. A strong and lofty wall girdled it in. This wall had gates of iron. The courtiers, having entered, brought furnaces and massy hammers and welded the bolts. They resolved to leave means neither of ingress or egress to the sudden impulses of despair or of frenzy from within. The abbey was amply provisioned. With such precautions the courtiers might bid defiance to contagion. The external world could take care of itself. In the meantime it was folly to grieve, or to think. The prince had provided all the appliances of pleasure. There were buffoons, there were improvisatori, there were ballet-dancers, there were musicians, there was Beauty, there was wine. All these and security were within. Without was the "Red Death."

It was toward the close of the fifth or sixth month of his seclusion, and while the pestilence raged most furiously abroad, that the Prince Prospero entertained his thousand friends at a masked ball of the most unusual magnificence.

It was a voluptuous scene, that masquerade. But first let me tell of the rooms in which it was held. There were seven—an imperial suite. In many palaces, however, such suites form a long and straight vista, while the folding doors slide back nearly to the walls on either hand, so that the view of the whole extent is scarcely impeded. Here the case was very different; as might have been expected from the duke's love of the *bizarre*. The apartments were so irregularly disposed that the vision embraced but little more than one at a time. There was a sharp turn at every twenty or thirty yards, and at each turn a novel effect. To the right and left, in the middle of each wall, a tall and narrow Gothic window looked out upon a closed corridor which pursued the windings of the suite. These windows were of stained glass whose color varied in accordance with the prevailing hue of the decorations of the chamber into which it opened. That at the eastern extremity was hung, for example, in blue—and vividly blue were its windows. The second chamber was purple in its ornaments and tapestries, and here the panes were purple. The third was green throughout, and so were the casements. The fourth was furnished and lighted

2. *Avator*—properly, avatar, reincarnation. 21. *improvisatori*—properly, makers of *ex tempore* verses.

with orange—the fifth with white—the sixth with violet. The seventh apartment was closely shrouded in black velvet tapestries that hung all over the ceiling and down the walls, falling in heavy folds upon a carpet of the same material and hue. But in this chamber only, the color of the windows failed to correspond with the decorations. The panes here were scarlet—a deep blood color. Now in no one of the seven apartments was there any lamp or candelabrum, amid the profusion of golden ornaments that lay scattered to and fro or depended from the roof. There was no light of any kind emanating from lamp or candle within the suite of chambers. But in the corridors that followed the suite, there stood, opposite to each window, a heavy tripod, bearing a brazier of fire that projected its rays through the tinted glass and so glaringly illumined the room. And thus were produced a multitude of gaudy and fantastic appearances. But in the western or black chamber the effect of the fire-light that streamed upon the dark hangings through the blood-tinted panes, was ghastly in the extreme, and produced so wild a look upon the countenances of those who entered, that there were few of the company bold enough to set foot within its precincts at all.

It was in this apartment, also, that there stood against the western wall, a gigantic clock of ebony. Its pendulum swung to and fro with a dull, heavy, monotonous clang; and when the minute-hand made the circuit of the face, and the hour was to be stricken, there came from the brazen lungs of the clock a sound which was clear and loud and deep and exceedingly musical, but of so peculiar a note and emphasis that, at each lapse of an hour, the musicians of the orchestra were constrained to pause, momentarily, in their performance, to hearken to the sound; and thus the waltzers perforce ceased their evolutions; and there was a brief disconcert of the whole gay company; and, while the chimes of the clock yet rang, it was observed that the giddiest grew pale, and the more aged and sedate passed their hands over their brows as if in confused reverie or meditation. But when the echoes had fully ceased, a light laughter at once pervaded the assembly; the musicians looked at each other and smiled as if at their own nervousness and folly, and made whispering vows, each to the other, that the next chiming of the clock should produce in them no similar emotion; and then, after the lapse of sixty minutes (which embrace three thousand and six hundred seconds of the Time that flies,) there came yet another chiming of the clock, and then were the same disconcert and tremulousness and meditation as before.

But, in spite of these things, it was a gay and magnificent revel. The tastes of the duke were peculiar. He had a fine eye for colors and effects. He disregarded the *decora* of mere fashion. His plans were bold and fiery, and his conceptions glowed with barbaric lustre. There are some who would have thought him mad. His followers felt that he was not. It was necessary to hear and see and touch him to be *sure* that he was not.

He had directed, in great part, the movable embellishments of the seven chambers, upon occasion of this great *fête*; and it was his own guiding taste which had given character to the masqueraders. Be sure they were grotesque.

26. *disconcert*—lack of concert, lack of order. 39. *decora*—decorations, embellishments,

There were much glare and glitter and piquancy and phantasm—much of what has been since seen in “Hernani.” There were arabesque figures with unsuited limbs and appointments. There were delirious fancies such as the madman fashions. There was much of the beautiful, much of the wanton, much of the *bizarre*, something of the terrible, and not a little of that which might have excited disgust. To and fro in the seven chambers there stalked, in fact, a multitude of dreams. And these—the dreams—writhed in and about, taking hue from the rooms, and causing the wild music of the orchestra to seem as the echo of their steps. And, anon, there strikes the ebony clock which stands in the hall of the velvet. And then, for a moment, all is still, and all is silent save the voice of the clock. The dreams are stiff-frozen as they stand. But the echoes of the chime die away—they have endured but an instant—and a light, half-subdued laughter floats after them as they depart. And now again the music swells, and the dreams live, and writhe to and fro more merrily than ever, taking hue from the many tinted windows through which stream the rays from the tripods. But to the chamber which lies most westwardly of the seven, there are now none of the maskers who venture; for the night is waning away; and there flows a ruddier light through the blood-colored panes; and the blackness of the sable drapery appalls; and to him whose foot falls upon the sable carpet, there comes from the near clock of ebony a muffled peal more solemnly emphatic than any which reaches *their* ears who indulge in the more remote gayeties of the other apartments.

But these other apartments were densely crowded, and in them beat feverishly the heart of life. And the revel went whirlingly on, until at length there commenced the sounding of midnight upon the clock. And then the music ceased, as I have told; and the evolutions of the waltzers were quieted; and there was an uneasy cessation of all things as before. But now there were twelve strokes to be sounded by the bell of the clock; and thus it happened, perhaps, that more of thought crept, with more of time, into the meditations of the thoughtful among those who revelled. And thus, too, it happened, perhaps, that before the last echoes of the last chime had utterly sunk into silence, there were many individuals in the crowd who had found leisure to become aware of the presence of a masked figure which had arrested the attention of no single individual before. And the rumor of this new presence having spread itself whisperingly around, there arose at length from the whole company, a buzz, or murmur, expressive of disapprobation and surprise—then, finally, of terror, of horror, and of disgust.

In an assembly of phantasms such as I have painted, it may well be supposed that no ordinary appearance could have excited such sensation. In truth the masquerade license of the night was nearly unlimited; but the figure in question had out-Heroded Herod, and gone beyond the bounds of even the prince's indefinite decorum. There are chords in the hearts of the most reckless which

2. “Hernani”—a costume play by Victor Hugo (1830), generally regarded as the beginning of the romantic movement in the French theater. 2-3. *unsuited . . . appointments*—that is, whose limbs did not suit their costumes (appointments). 26. *waltzers*—The waltz, then a relatively new dance, was regarded as a bit “fast” when this story was written. 41. *out-Heroded Herod*—Cf. Hamlet’s speech to the players, *Hamlet*, Act III, scene 2.

cannot be touched without emotion. Even with the utterly lost, to whom life and death are equally jests, there are matters of which no jest can be made. The whole company, indeed, seemed now deeply to feel that in the costume and bearing of the stranger neither wit nor propriety existed. The figure was  
5 tall and gaunt, and shrouded from head to foot in the habiliments of the grave. The mask which concealed the visage was made so nearly to resemble the countenance of a stiffened corpse that the closest scrutiny must have had difficulty in detecting the cheat. And yet all this might have been endured, if not approved, by the mad revellers around. But the mummer had gone so far as  
10 to assume the type of the Red Death. His vesture was dabbled in *blood*—and his broad brow, with all the features of the face, was besprinkled with the scarlet horror.

When the eyes of Prince Prospero fell upon this spectral image (which with a slow and solemn movement, as if more fully to sustain its *rôle*, stalked to and  
15 fro among the waltzers) he was seen to be convulsed, in the first moment, with a strong shudder either of terror or distaste; but, in the next, his brow reddened with rage.

“Who dares?” he demanded hoarsely of the courtiers who stood near him—  
“who dares insult us with this blasphemous mockery? Seize him and unmask  
20 him—that we may know whom we have to hang at sunrise, from the battlements!”

It was in the eastern or blue chamber in which stood the Prince Prospero as he uttered these words. They rang throughout the seven rooms loudly and clearly—for the prince was a bold and robust man, and the music had become  
25 hushed at the waving of his hand.

It was in the blue room where stood the prince, with a group of pale courtiers by his side. At first, as he spoke, there was a slight rushing movement of this group in the direction of the intruder, who at the moment was also near at hand, and now, with deliberate and stately step, made closer approach to the  
30 speaker. But from a certain nameless awe with which the mad assumptions of the mummer had inspired the whole party, there were found none who put forth hand to seize him; so that, unimpeded, he passed within a yard of the prince’s person; and, while the vast assembly, as if with one impulse, shrank from the centres of the rooms to the walls, he made his way uninterruptedly,  
35 but with the same solemn and measured step which had distinguished him from the first, through the blue chamber to the purple—through the purple to the green—through the green to the orange—through this again to the white—and even thence to the violet, ere a decided movement had been made to arrest him. It was then, however, that the Prince Prospero, maddening with rage and  
40 the shame of his own momentary cowardice, rushed hurriedly through the six chambers, while none followed him on account of a deadly terror that had seized upon all. He bore aloft a drawn dagger, and had approached, in rapid impetuosity, to within three or four feet of the retreating figure, when the latter, having attained the extremity of the velvet apartment, turned suddenly and  
45 confronted his pursuer. There was a sharp cry—and the dagger dropped gleaming upon the sable carpet, upon which, instantly afterwards, fell prostrate in

10. type—typical appearance.

death the Prince Prospero. Then, summoning the wild courage of despair, a throng of the revellers at once threw themselves into the black apartment, and, seizing the mummer, whose tall figure stood erect and motionless within the shadow of the ebony clock, gasped in unutterable horror at finding the grave-  
cerements and corpse-like mask which they handled with so violent a rude- 5  
ness, untenanted by any tangible form.

And now was acknowledged the presence of the Red Death. He had come like a thief in the night. And one by one dropped the revellers in the blood-  
bedewed halls of their revel, and died each in the despairing posture of his fall. And the life of the ebony clock went out with that of the last of the gay. And 10  
the flames of the tripods expired. And Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all.

## THE PURLOINED LETTER

Nil sapientiae odiosius acumine nimio.

SENECA

"The Purloined Letter," the fourth of Poe's "tales of ratiocination," or detective stories, to be printed, appeared first of all in *The Gift*, an annual appearing in 1845. It was then collected into the *Tales* of 1845, from which the present text is taken. Motto: "Nothing is more distasteful to good sense than too much subtlety." Lucius Annaeus Seneca (3 B.C.-65 A.D.).

AT PARIS, just after dark one gusty evening in the autumn of 18—, I was enjoying the two-fold luxury of meditation and a meerschaum, in com-  
pany with my friend C. Auguste Dupin, in his little back library, or 15  
book-closet, *au troisième*, No. 33, *Rue Dunot, Faubourg St. Germain*. For one hour at least we had maintained a profound silence; while each, to any casual observer, might have seemed intently and exclusively occupied with the curling eddies of smoke that oppressed the atmosphere of the chamber. For myself, however, I was mentally discussing certain topics which had formed matter 20  
for conversation between us at an earlier period of the evening; I mean the affair of the Rue Morgue, and the mystery attending the murder of Marie Rogêt. I looked upon it, therefore, as something of a coincidence, when the door of our apartment was thrown open and admitted our old acquaintance, Monsieur G——, the Prefect of the Parisian police. 25

We gave him a hearty welcome; for there was nearly half as much of the entertaining as of the contemptible about the man, and we had not seen him for several years. We had been sitting in the dark, and Dupin now arose for the purpose of lighting a lamp, but sat down again, without doing so, upon G.'s saying that he had called to consult us, or rather to ask the opinion of my 30  
friend, about some official business which had occasioned a great deal of trouble.

8. thief in the night—*Cf.* I Thess. 5: 1-2. 15. Dupin—Dupin, who is Poe's contribution to the gallery of eccentric detectives, is first introduced to solve the mystery of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," and later "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt." 16. *au troisième*—M. Dupin lived on the third floor at No. 33, Dunot Street, in the ward of St. Germain. 25. Monsieur G———Monsieur G—— also appears in the two earlier stories concerning M. Dupin.

"If it is any point requiring reflection," observed Dupin, as he forbore to enkindle the wick, "we shall examine it to better purpose in the dark."

"That is another of your odd notions," said the Prefect, who had a fashion of calling everything "odd" that was beyond his comprehension, and thus lived  
5 amid an absolute legion of "oddities."

"Very true," said Dupin, as he supplied his visiter with a pipe, and rolled towards him a comfortable chair.

"And what is the difficulty now?" I asked. "Nothing more in the assassination way, I hope?"

10 "Oh no; nothing of that nature. The fact is, the business is *very* simple indeed, and I make no doubt that we can manage it sufficiently well ourselves; but then I thought Dupin would like to hear the details of it, because it is so excessively *odd*."

"Simple and odd," said Dupin.

15 "Why, yes; and not exactly that, either. The fact is, we have all been a good deal puzzled because the affair *is* so simple, and yet baffles us altogether."

"Perhaps it is the very simplicity of the thing which puts you at fault," said my friend.

"What nonsense you *do* talk!" replied the Prefect, laughing heartily.

20 "Perhaps the mystery is a little *too* plain," said Dupin.

"Oh, good heavens! who ever heard of such an idea?"

"A little *too* self-evident."

"Ha! ha! ha!—ha! ha! ha!—ho! ho! ho!" roared our visitor, profoundly amused, "oh, Dupin, you will be the death of me yet!"

25 "And what, after all, *is* the matter on hand?" I asked.

"Why, I will tell you," replied the Prefect, as he gave a long, steady, and contemplative puff, and settled himself in his chair. "I will tell you in a few words; but, before I begin, let me caution you that this is an affair demanding the greatest secrecy, and that I should most probably lose the position I now hold,

30 were it known that I confided it to any one."

"Proceed," said I.

"Or not," said Dupin.

"Well, then; I have received personal information, from a very high quarter, that a certain document of the last importance, has been purloined from the  
35 royal apartments. The individual who purloined it is known; this beyond a doubt; he was seen to take it. It is known, also, that it still remains in his possession."

"How is this known?" asked Dupin.

"It is clearly inferred," replied the Prefect, "from the nature of the document,  
40 and from the non-appearance of certain results which would at once arise from its passing *out* of the robber's possession;—that is to say, from his employing it as he must design in the end to employ it."

"Be a little more explicit," I said.

"Well, I may venture so far as to say that the paper gives its holder a certain  
45 power in a certain quarter where such power is immensely valuable." The Prefect was fond of the cant of diplomacy.

"Still I do not quite understand," said Dupin.

"No? Well; the disclosure of the document to a third person, who shall be nameless, would bring in question the honor of a personage of most exalted station; and this fact gives the holder of the document an ascendancy over the illustrious personage whose honor and peace are so jeopardized."

"But this ascendancy," I interposed, "would depend upon the robber's knowledge of the loser's knowledge of the robber. Who would dare——"

"The thief," said G., "is the Minister D——, who dares all things, those unbecoming as well as those becoming a man. The method of the theft was not less ingenious than bold. The document in question—a letter, to be frank—had been received by the personage robbed while alone in the royal *boudoir*. During its perusal she was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of the other exalted personage from whom especially it was her wish to conceal it. After a hurried and vain endeavor to thrust it in a drawer, she was forced to place it, open as it was, upon a table. The address, however, was uppermost, and, the contents thus unexposed, the letter escaped notice. At this juncture enters the Minister D——. His lynx eye immediately perceives the paper, recognizes the handwriting of the address, observes the confusion of the personage addressed, and fathoms her secret. After some business transactions, hurried through in his ordinary manner, he produces a letter somewhat similar to the one in question, opens it, pretends to read it, and then places it in close juxtaposition to the other. Again he converses, for some fifteen minutes, upon the public affairs. At length, in taking leave, he takes also from the table the letter to which he had no claim. Its rightful owner saw, but, of course, dared not call attention to the act, in the presence of the third personage who stood at her elbow. The Minister decamped; leaving his own letter—one of no importance—upon the table."

"Here, then," said Dupin to me, "you have precisely what you demand to make the ascendancy complete—the robber's knowledge of the loser's knowledge of the robber."

"Yes," replied the Prefect; "and the power thus attained has, for some months past, been wielded, for political purposes, to a very dangerous extent. The personage robbed is more thoroughly convinced, every day, of the necessity of reclaiming her letter. But this, of course, cannot be done openly. In fine, driven to despair, she has committed the matter to me."

"Than whom," said Dupin, amid a perfect whirlwind of smoke, "no more sagacious agent could, I suppose, be desired, or even imagined."

"You flatter me," replied the Prefect; "but it is possible that some such opinion may have been entertained."

"It is clear," said I, "as you observe, that the letter is still in possession of the minister; since it is this possession, and not any employment of the letter, which bestows the power. With the employment the power departs."

"True," said G.; "and upon this conviction I proceeded. My first care was to make thorough search of the minister's hotel; and here my chief embarrass-

11. *boudoir*—here used in the old-fashioned sense of withdrawing-room. 44. *hotel*—here used to mean a pretentious private house.



ment lay in the necessity of searching without his knowledge. Beyond all things, I have been warned of the danger which would result from giving him reason to suspect our design."

"But," said I, "you are quite *au fait* in these investigations. The Parisian  
5 police have done this thing often before."

"O, yes; and for this reason I did not despair. The habits of the minister gave me, too, a great advantage. He is frequently absent from home all night. His servants are by no means numerous. They sleep at a distance from their master's apartment, and, being chiefly Neapolitans, are readily made drunk. I  
10 have keys, as you know, with which I can open any chamber or cabinet in Paris. For three months a night has not passed, during the greater part of which I have not been engaged, personally, in ransacking the D—— Hotel. My honor is interested, and, to mention a great secret, the reward is enormous. So I did not abandon the search until I had become fully satisfied that the thief is a  
15 more astute man than myself. I fancy that I have investigated every nook and corner of the premises in which it is possible that the paper can be concealed."

"But is it not possible," I suggested, "that although the letter may be in possession of the minister, as it unquestionably is, he may have concealed it elsewhere than upon his own premises?"

"This is barely possible," said Dupin. "The present peculiar condition of affairs at court, and especially of those intrigues in which D—— is known to be involved, would render the instant availability of the document—its susceptibility of being produced at a moment's notice—a point of nearly equal importance with its possession."

"Its susceptibility of being produced?" said I.

"That is to say, of being *destroyed*," said Dupin.

"True," I observed; "the paper is clearly then upon the premises. As for its being upon the person of the minister, we may consider that as out of the question."

"Entirely," said the Prefect. "He has been twice waylaid, as if by footpads, and his person rigorously searched under my own inspection."

"You might have spared yourself this trouble," said Dupin. "D——, I presume, is not altogether a fool, and, if not, must have anticipated these waylayings, as a matter of course."

"Not *altogether* a fool," said G., "but then he's a poet, which I take to be only one remove from a fool."

"True," said Dupin, after a long and thoughtful whiff from his meerschaum, "although I have been guilty of certain doggerel myself."

"Suppose you detail," said I, "the *particulars* of your search."

"Why, the fact is, we took our time, and we searched *every where*. I have had long experience in these affairs. I took the entire building, room by room; devoting the nights of a whole week to each. We examined, first, the furniture of each apartment. We opened every possible drawer; and I presume you know that, to a properly trained police agent, such a thing as a *secret* drawer is im-  
45 possible. Any man is a dolt who permits a 'secret' drawer to escape him in a search of this kind. The thing is *so* plain. There is a certain amount of bulk—

4. *au fait*—accomplished, "in the know."

of space—to be accounted for in every cabinet. Then we have accurate rules. The fiftieth part of a line could not escape us. After the cabinets we took the chairs. The cushions we probed with the fine long needles you have seen me employ. From the tables we removed the tops.”

“Why so?”

“Sometimes the top of a table, or other similarly arranged piece of furniture, is removed by the person wishing to conceal an article; then the leg is excavated, the article deposited within the cavity, and the top replaced. The bottoms and tops of bed-posts are employed in the same way.”

“But could not the cavity be detected by sounding?” I asked.

“By no means, if, when the article is deposited, a sufficient wadding of cotton be placed around it. Besides, in our case, we were obliged to proceed without noise.”

“But you could not have removed—you could not have taken to pieces *all* articles of furniture in which it would have been possible to make a deposit in the manner you mention. A letter may be compressed into a thin spiral roll, not differing much in shape or bulk from a large knitting-needle, and in this form it might be inserted into the rung of a chair, for example. You did not take to pieces all the chairs?”

“Certainly not; but we did better—we examined the rungs of every chair in the hotel, and, indeed, the jointings of every description of furniture, by the aid of a most powerful microscope. Had there been any traces of recent disturbance we should not have failed to detect it instantly. A single grain of gimlet-dust, for example, would have been as obvious as an apple. Any disorder in the glueing—any unusual gaping in the joints—would have sufficed to insure detection.”

“I presume you looked to the mirrors, between the boards and the plates, and you probed the beds and the bed-clothes, as well as the curtains and carpets.”

“That of course; and when we had absolutely completed every particle of the furniture in this way, then we examined the house itself. We divided its entire surface into compartments, which we numbered, so that none might be missed; then we scrutinized each individual square inch throughout the premises, including the two houses immediately adjoining, with the microscope, as before.”

“The two houses adjoining!” I exclaimed; “you must have had a great deal of trouble.”

“We had; but the reward offered is prodigious.”

“You include the *grounds* about the houses?”

“All the grounds are paved with brick. They gave us comparatively little trouble. We examined the moss between the bricks, and found it undisturbed.”

“You looked among D——’s papers, of course, and into the books of the library?”

“Certainly; we opened every package and parcel; we not only opened every book, but we turned over every leaf in each volume, not contenting ourselves with a mere shake, according to the fashion of some of our police officers. We also measured the thickness of every book-cover, with the most accurate ad-

measurement, and applied to each the most jealous scrutiny of the microscope. Had any of the bindings been recently meddled with, it would have been utterly impossible that the fact should have escaped observation. Some five or six volumes, just from the hands of the binder, we carefully probed, longitudinally, with the needles."

"You explored the floors beneath the carpets?"

"Beyond doubt. We removed every carpet, and examined the boards with the microscope."

"And the paper on the walls?"

10 "Yes."

"You looked into the cellars?"

"We did."

"Then," I said, "you have been making a miscalculation, and the letter is *not* upon the premises, as you suppose."

15 "I fear you are right there," said the Prefect. "And now, Dupin, what would you advise me to do?"

"To make a thorough re-search of the premises."

"That is absolutely needless," replied G—. "I am not more sure that I breathe than I am that the letter is not at the Hotel."

20 "I have no better advice to give you," said Dupin. "You have, of course, an accurate description of the letter?"

"Oh yes!"—And here the Prefect, producing a memorandum-book, proceeded to read aloud a minute account of the internal, and especially of the external appearance of the missing document. Soon after finishing the perusal of this description, he took his departure, more entirely depressed in spirits than I had  
25 ever known the good gentleman before.

In about a month afterwards he paid us another visit, and found us occupied very nearly as before. He took a pipe and a chair and entered into some ordinary conversation. At length I said,—

30 "Well, but G—, what of the purloined letter? I presume you have at last made up your mind that there is no such thing as overreaching the Minister?"

"Confound him, say I—yes; I made the re-examination, however, as Dupin suggested—but it was all labor lost, as I knew it would be."

"How much was the reward offered, did you say?" asked Dupin.

35 "Why, a very great deal—a *very* liberal reward—I don't like to say how much, precisely; but one thing I *will* say, that I wouldn't mind giving my individual check for fifty thousand francs to any one who could obtain me that letter. The fact is, it is becoming of more and more importance every day; and the reward has been lately doubled. If it were trebled, however, I could do no more than  
40 I have done."

"Why, yes," said Dupin, drawlingly, between the whiffs of his meerschaum, "I really—think, G—, you have not exerted yourself—to the utmost in this matter. You might—do a little more, I think, eh?"

"How?—in what way?"

45 "Why—puff, puff—you might—puff, puff—employ counsel in the matter, eh?—puff, puff, puff. Do you remember the story they tell of Abernethy?"

**46. Abernethy**—Dr. John Abernethy (1764-1831), a famous and crotchety British medical man, whose career was prolific in similar anecdotes.

"No: hang Abernethy!"

"To be sure! hang him and welcome. But, once upon a time, a certain rich miser conceived the design of sponging upon this Abernethy for a medical opinion. Getting up, for this purpose, an ordinary conversation in a private company, he insinuated his case to the physician, as that of an imaginary individual.

"We will suppose," said the miser, 'that his symptoms are such and such; now, doctor, what would *you* have directed him to take?'

"Take!" said Abernethy, 'why, take *advice*, to be sure.'

"But," said the Prefect, a little discomposed, "I am *perfectly* willing to take advice, and to pay for it. I would *really* give fifty thousand francs to any one who would aid me in the matter."

"In that case," replied Dupin, opening a drawer, and producing a check-book, "you may as well fill me up a check for the amount mentioned. When you have signed it, I will hand you the letter."

I was astounded. The Prefect appeared absolutely thunder-stricken. For some minutes he remained speechless and motionless, looking incredulously at my friend with open mouth, and eyes that seemed starting from their sockets; then, apparently recovering himself in some measure, he seized a pen, and after several pauses and vacant stares, finally filled up and signed a check for fifty thousand francs, and handed it across the table to Dupin. The latter examined it carefully and deposited it in his pocket-book; then, unlocking an *escritoire*, took thence a letter and gave it to the Prefect. This functionary grasped it in a perfect agony of joy, opened it with a trembling hand, cast a rapid glance at its contents, and then, scrambling and struggling to the door, rushed at length unceremoniously from the room and from the house, without having uttered a syllable since Dupin had requested him to fill up the check.

When he had gone, my friend entered into some explanations.

"The Parisian police," he said, "are exceedingly able in their way. They are persevering, ingenious, cunning, and thoroughly versed in the knowledge which their duties seem chiefly to demand. Thus, when G—— detailed to us his mode of searching the premises at the Hotel D——, I felt entire confidence in his having made a satisfactory investigation—so far as his labors extended."

"So far as his labors extended?" said I.

"Yes," said Dupin. "The measures adopted were not only the best of their kind, but carried out to absolute perfection. Had the letter been deposited within the range of their search, these fellows would, beyond a question, have found it."

I merely laughed—but he seemed quite serious in all that he said.

"The measures, then," he continued, "were good in their kind, and well executed; their defect lay in their being inapplicable to the case, and to the man. A certain set of highly ingenious resources are, with the Prefect, a sort of Procrustean bed, to which he forcibly adapts his designs. But he perpetually errs by being too deep or too shallow, for the matter in hand; and many a schoolboy is a better reasoner than he. I knew one about eight years of age, whose success at

22. *escritoire*—writing-desk. 42-43. *Procrustean bed*—Procrustes, a mythological robber of humorous temperament, possessed an iron bed, on which he stretched his victims. If they were too long, their legs were cut short; if not long enough, their legs were stretched to fill it.

guessing in the game of 'even and odd' attracted universal admiration. This game is simple, and is played with marbles. One player holds in his hand a number of these toys, and demands of another whether that number is even or odd. If the guess is right, the guesser wins one; if wrong, he loses one. The  
 5 boy to whom I allude won all the marbles of the school. Of course he had some principle of guessing; and this lay in mere observation and admeasurement of the astuteness of his opponents. For example, an arrant simpleton is his opponent, and, holding up his closed hand, asks, 'are they even or odd?' Our school-boy replies, 'odd,' and loses; but upon the second trial he wins, for he then  
 10 says to himself, 'the simpleton had them even upon the first trial, and his amount of cunning is just sufficient to make him have them odd upon the second; I will therefore guess odd;'—he guesses odd, and wins. Now, with a simpleton a degree above the first, he would have reasoned thus: 'This fellow finds that in the first instance I guessed odd, and, in the second, he will pro-  
 15 pose to himself, upon the first impulse, a simple variation from even to odd, as did the first simpleton; but then a second thought will suggest that this is too simple a variation, and finally he will decide upon putting it even as before. I will therefore guess even;'—he guesses even, and wins. Now this mode of reasoning in the schoolboy, whom his fellows termed 'lucky,'—what, in its last  
 20 analysis, is it?"

"It is merely," I said, "an identification of the reasoner's intellect with that of his opponent."

"It is," said Dupin; "and, upon inquiring of the boy by what means he effected the *thorough* identification in which his success consisted, I received  
 25 answer as follows: 'When I wish to find out how wise, or how stupid, or how good, or how wicked is any one, or what are his thoughts at the moment, I fashion the expression of my face, as accurately as possible, in accordance with the expression of his, and then wait to see what thoughts or sentiments arise in my mind or heart, as if to match or correspond with the expression.' This re-  
 30 sponse of the schoolboy lies at the bottom of all the spurious profundity which has been attributed to Rochefoucauld, to La Bougive, to Machiavelli, and to Campanella."

"And the identification," I said, "of the reasoner's intellect with that of his opponent, depends, if I understand you aright, upon the accuracy with which  
 35 the opponent's intellect is admeasured."

"For its practical value it depends upon this," replied Dupin; "and the Prefect and his cohort fail so frequently, first, by default of this identification, and, secondly, by ill-admeasurement, or rather through non-admeasurement, of the intellect with which they are engaged. They consider only their *own* ideas of  
 40 ingenuity; and, in searching for anything hidden, advert only to the modes in which *they* would have hidden it. They are right in this much—that their own ingenuity is a faithful representative of that of *the mass*; but when the cunning of the individual felon is diverse in character from their own, the felon foils them, of course. This always happens when it is above their own, and very

31. Rochefoucauld . . . —François de la Rochefoucauld (1613-1680), whose *Maximes* first appeared in 1665. For Machiavelli and Campanella see note 36, p. 720. Who is meant by *La Bougive* is not clear.

usually when it is below. They have no variation of principle in their investigations; at best, when urged by some unusual emergency—by some extraordinary reward—they extend or exaggerate their old modes of *practice*, without touching their principles. What, for example, in this case of D—, has been done to vary the principle of action? What is all this boring, and probing, and sound- 5 ing, and scrutinizing with the microscope, and dividing the surface of the building into registered square inches—what is it all but an exaggeration of *the application* of the one principle or set of principles of search, which are based upon the one set of notions regarding human ingenuity, to which the Prefect, in the long routine of his duty, has been accustomed? Do you not see he has taken it for granted that *all* men proceed to conceal a letter,—not exactly in a gimlet-hole bored in a chair-leg—but, at least, in *some* out-of-the-way hole or corner suggested by the same tenor of thought which would urge a man to secrete a letter in a gimlet-hole bored in a chair-leg? And do you not see also, that such *recherchés* nooks for concealment are adapted only for ordinary occasions, and would be adopted only by ordinary intellects; for, in all cases of concealment, a disposal of the article concealed—a disposal of it in this *recherché* manner,—is, in the very first instance, presumable and presumed; and thus its discovery depends, not at all upon the acumen, but altogether upon the mere care, patience, and determination of the seekers; and where the case is of im- 10 portance—or, what amounts to the same thing in the policial eyes, when the reward is of magnitude—the qualities in question have *never* been known to fail. You will now understand what I meant in suggesting that, had the purloined letter been hidden anywhere within the limits of the Prefect's examination—in other words, had the principle of its concealment been comprehended 15 within the principles of the Prefect—its discovery would have been a matter altogether beyond question. This functionary however, has been thoroughly mystified; and the remote source of his defeat lies in the supposition that the Minister is a fool, because he has acquired renown as a poet. All fools are poets; thus the Prefect *feels*; and he is merely guilty of a *non distributio medii* in thence inferring that all poets are fools.”

“But is this really the poet?” I asked. “There are two brothers, I know; and both have attained reputation in letters. The Minister I believe has written learnedly on the Differential Calculus. He is a mathematician, and no poet.”

“You are mistaken; I know him well; he is both. As poet *and* mathematician, he would reason well; as mere mathematician, he could not have reasoned at all, and thus would have been at the mercy of the Prefect.” 35

“You surprise me,” I said, “by these opinions, which have been contradicted by the voice of the world. You do not mean to set at naught the well-digested idea of centuries. The mathematical reason has long been regarded as *the reason par excellence*.” 40

“*Il y a à parier*,” replied Dupin, quoting from Chamfort, “*‘que toute idée publique, toute convention reçue, est une sottise, car elle a convenue au plus*

15. *recherchés*—here about equivalent to far-fetched. 30. *non distributio medii*—the fallacy of the undistributed middle—a term in logic, connoting a failure to define an important element in the syllogism. 40-41. *the reason par excellence*—the very essence of reason. 42. “*Il y a . . .*”—“The odds are that every public idea, every convention agreed upon is a piece of folly since it is agreed to by the majority.” Sebastian Roch Nicolas Chamfort (1741-1794), famous for his *Maximes et Pensées*, was a wit and moralist.

*grand nombre.*' The mathematicians, I grant you, have done their best to promulgate the popular error to which you allude, and which is none the less an error for its promulgation as truth. With an art worthy a better cause, for example, they have insinuated the term 'analysis' into application to algebra.

5 The French are the originators of this particular deception; but if a term is of any importance—if words derive any value from applicability—then 'analysis' conveys 'algebra' about as much as, in Latin, '*ambitus*' implies 'ambition,' '*religio*' 'religion,' or '*homines honesti*' a set of *honorable men*."

"You have a quarrel on hand, I see," said I, "with some of the algebraists of Paris; but proceed."

"I dispute the availability, and thus the value, of that reason which is cultivated in any special form other than the abstractly logical. I dispute, in particular, the reason educed by mathematical study. The mathematics are the science of form and quantity; mathematical reasoning is merely logic applied

15 to observation upon form and quantity. The great error lies in supposing that even the truths of what is called *pure algebra*, are abstract or general truths. And this error is so egregious that I am confounded at the universality with which it has been received. Mathematical axioms are *not* axioms of general truth. What is true of *relation*—of form and quantity—is often grossly false in

20 regard to morals, for example. In this latter science it is very usually *untrue* that the aggregated parts are equal to the whole. In chemistry also the axiom fails. In the consideration of motive it fails; for two motives, each of a given value, have not, necessarily, a value when united, equal to the sum of their values apart. There are numerous other mathematical truths which are only

25 truths within the limits of *relation*. But the mathematician argues, from his *finite truths*, through habit, as if they were of an absolutely general applicability—as the world indeed imagines them to be. Bryant, in his very learned 'Mythology,' mentions an analogous source of error, when he says that 'although the Pagan fables are not believed, yet we forget ourselves continually, and make

30 inferences from them as existing realities.' With the algebraists, however, who are Pagans themselves, the 'Pagan fables' *are* believed, and the inferences are made, not so much through lapse of memory, as through an unaccountable ad-dling of the brains. In short, I never yet encountered the mere mathematician who could be trusted out of equal roots, or one who did not clandestinely hold

35 it as a point of his faith that  $x^2 + px$  was absolutely and unconditionally equal to  $q$ . Say to one of these gentlemen, by way of experiment, if you please, that you believe occasions may occur where  $x^2 + px$  is *not* altogether equal to  $q$ , and, having made him understand what you mean, get out of his reach as speedily as convenient, for, beyond doubt, he will endeavor to knock you down.

40 "I mean to say," continued Dupin, while I merely laughed at his last observations, "that if the Minister had been no more than a mathematician, the Prefect would have been under no necessity of giving me this check. I knew

7-8. The point is that the derivatives of a word do not necessarily indicate the original meaning of the word. In Latin *ambitus* means a going around, and hence an unlawful striving for office; *religio* is merely reverence for the gods; and *honestus* (plural, *honesti*) means respectable.

18. **Mathematical axioms**—Poe here implies the assumptions of some branches of modern mathematical theory, such as non-Euclidean geometry. 27. **Bryant**—Jacob Bryant (1715-1804) published in three volumes *A New System, or, an Analysis of Ancient Mythology*, London, 1774-76.

him, however, as both mathematician and poet, and my measures were adapted to his capacity, with reference to the circumstances by which he was surrounded. I knew him as a courtier, too, and as a bold *intriguer*. Such a man, I considered, could not fail to be aware of the ordinary policial modes of action. He could not have failed to anticipate—and events have proved that he did not fail to anticipate—the waylayings to which he was subjected. He must have foreseen, I reflected, the secret investigations of his premises. His frequent absences from home at night, which were hailed by the Prefect as certain aids to his success, I regarded only as *ruses*, to afford opportunity for thorough search to the police, and thus the sooner to impress them with the conviction to which G—, in fact, did finally arrive—the conviction that the letter was not upon the premises. I felt, also, that the whole train of thought, which I was at some pains in detailing to you just now, concerning the invariable principle of policial action in searches for articles concealed—I felt that this whole train of thought would necessarily pass through the mind of the Minister. It would imperatively lead him to despise all the ordinary *nooks* of concealment. He could not, I reflected, be so weak as not to see that the most intricate and remote recess of his hotel would be as open as his commonest closets to the eyes, to the probes, to the gimlets, and to the microscopes of the Prefect. I saw, in fine, that he would be driven, as a matter of course, to *simplicity*, if not deliberately induced to it as a matter of choice. You will remember, perhaps, how desperately the Prefect laughed when I suggested, upon our first interview, that it was just possible this mystery troubled him so much on account of its being so *very* self-evident.”

“Yes,” said I, “I remember his merriment well. I really thought he would have fallen into convulsions.”

“The material world,” continued Dupin, “abounds with very strict analogies to the immaterial; and thus some color of truth has been given to the rhetorical dogma, that metaphor, or simile, may be made to strengthen an argument, as well as to embellish a description. The principle of the *vis inertiae*, for example, seems to be identical in physics and metaphysics. It is not more true in the former, that a large body is with more difficulty set in motion than a smaller one, and that its subsequent *momentum* is commensurate with this difficulty, than it is, in the latter, that intellects of the vaster capacity, while more forcible, more constant, and more eventful in their movements than those of inferior grade, are yet the less readily moved, and more embarrassed and full of hesitation in the first few steps of their progress. Again: have you ever noticed which of the street signs, over the shop doors, are the most attractive of attention?”

“I have never given the matter a thought,” I said.

“There is a game of puzzles,” he resumed, “which is played upon a map. One party playing requires another to find a given word—the name of town, river, state or empire—any word, in short, upon the motley and perplexed surface of the chart. A novice in the game generally seeks to embarrass his opponents by giving them the most minutely lettered names; but the adept selects such words as stretch, in large characters, from one end of the chart to



the other. These, like the over-largely lettered signs and placards of the street, escape observation by dint of being excessively obvious; and here the physical oversight is precisely analogous with the moral inapprehension by which the intellect suffers to pass unnoticed those considerations which are too obtrusively  
5 and too palpably self-evident. But this is a point, it appears, somewhat above or beneath the understanding of the Prefect. He never once thought it probable, or possible, that the Minister had deposited the letter immediately beneath the nose of the whole world, by way of best preventing any portion of that world from perceiving it.

10 "But the more I reflected upon the daring, dashing, and discriminating ingenuity of D—; upon the fact that the document must always have been *at hand*, if he intended to use it to good purpose; and upon the decisive evidence, obtained by the Prefect, that it was not hidden within the limits of that dignitary's ordinary search—the more satisfied I became that, to conceal this  
15 letter, the Minister had resorted to the comprehensive and sagacious expedient of not attempting to conceal it at all.

"Full of these ideas, I prepared myself with a pair of green spectacles, and called one fine morning, quite by accident, at the Ministerial hotel. I found D— at home, yawning, lounging, and dawdling, as usual, and pretending to  
20 be in the last extremity of *ennui*. He is, perhaps, the most really energetic human being now alive—but that is only when nobody sees him.

"To be even with him, I complained of my weak eyes, and lamented the necessity of the spectacles, under cover of which I cautiously and thoroughly surveyed the apartment, while seemingly intent only upon the conversation of  
25 my host.

"I paid especial attention to a large writing-table near which he sat, and upon which lay confusedly, some miscellaneous letters and other papers, with one or two musical instruments and a few books. Here, however, after a long and very deliberate scrutiny, I saw nothing to excite particular suspicion.

30 "At length my eyes, in going the circuit of the room, fell upon a trumpery filigree card-rack of paste-board, that hung dangling by a dirty blue ribbon from a little brass knob just beneath the middle of the mantel-piece. In this rack, which had three or four compartments, were five or six visiting cards and a solitary letter. This last was much soiled and crumpled. It was torn  
35 nearly in two, across the middle—as if a design, in the first instance, to tear it entirely up as worthless, had been altered, or stayed, in the second. It had a large black seal, bearing the D— cipher *very* conspicuously, and was addressed, in a diminutive female hand, to D—, the minister, himself. It was thrust carelessly, and even, as it seemed, contemptuously, into one of the upper  
40 divisions of the rack.

"No sooner had I glanced at this letter, than I concluded it to be that of which I was in search. To be sure, it was, to all appearance, radically different from the one of which the Prefect had read us so minute a description. Here the seal was large and black, with the D— cipher; there it was small  
45 and red, with the ducal arms of the S— family. Here, the address, to the Minister, was diminutive and feminine; there the superscription, to a certain royal personage, was markedly bold and decided; the size alone formed a point

of correspondence. But, then, the *radicalness* of these differences, which was excessive; the dirt; the soiled and torn condition of the paper, so inconsistent with the *true* methodical habits of D—, and so suggestive of a design to delude the beholder into an idea of the worthlessness of the document; these things, together with the hyperobtrusive situation of this document, full in the view of every visitor, and thus exactly in accordance with the conclusions to which I had previously arrived; these things, I say, were strongly corroborative of suspicion, in one who came with the intention to suspect.

"I protracted my visit as long as possible, and, while I maintained a most animated discussion with the Minister, on a topic which I knew well had never failed to interest and excite him, I kept my attention really riveted upon the letter. In this examination, I committed to memory its external appearance and arrangement in the rack; and also fell, at length, upon a discovery which set at rest whatever trivial doubt I might have entertained. In scrutinizing the edges of the paper, I observed them to be more *chafed* than seemed necessary. They presented the *broken* appearance which is manifested when a stiff paper, having been once folded and pressed with a folder, is refolded in a reversed direction, in the same creases or edges which had formed the original fold. This discovery was sufficient. It was clear to me that the letter had been turned, as a glove, inside out, re-directed, and re-sealed. I bade the Minister good morning, and took my departure at once, leaving a gold snuff-box upon the table.

"The next morning I called for the snuff-box, when we resumed, quite eagerly, the conversation of the preceding day. While thus engaged, however, a loud report, as if of a pistol, was heard immediately beneath the windows of the hotel, and was succeeded by a series of fearful screams, and the shoutings of a mob. D— rushed to a casement, threw it open, and looked out. In the meantime, I stepped to the card-rack, took the letter, put it in my pocket, and replaced it by a *fac-simile*, (so far as regards externals,) which I had carefully prepared at my lodgings; imitating the D— cipher, very readily, by means of a seal formed of bread.

"The disturbance in the street had been occasioned by the frantic behavior of a man with a musket. He had fired it among a crowd of women and children. It proved, however, to have been without ball, and the fellow was suffered to go his way as a lunatic or a drunkard. When he had gone, D— came from the window, whither I had followed him immediately upon securing the object in view. Soon afterwards I bade him farewell. The pretended lunatic was a man in my own pay."

"But what purpose had you," I asked, "in replacing the letter by a *fac-simile*? Would it not have been better, at the first visit, to have seized it openly, and departed?"

"D—," replied Dupin, "is a desperate man, and a man of nerve. His hotel, too, is not without attendants devoted to his interests. Had I made the wild attempt you suggest, I might never have left the Ministerial presence alive. The good people of Paris might have heard of me no more. But I had an object apart from these considerations. You know my political prepossessions. In this matter, I act as a partisan of the lady concerned. For eighteen months the Minister has had her in his power. She has now him in hers—since, being unaware

that the letter is not in his possession, he will proceed with his exactions as if it was. Thus will he inevitably commit himself, at once, to his political destruction. His downfall, too, will not be more precipitate than awkward. It is all very well to talk about the *facilis descensus Averni*; but in all kinds of climbing, as

- 5 Catalani said of singing, it is far more easy to get up than to come down. In the present instance I have no sympathy—at least no pity—for him who descends. He is that *monstrum horrendum*, an unprincipled man of genius. I confess, however, that I should like very well to know the precise character of his thoughts, when, being defied by her whom the Prefect terms ‘a certain person-  
10 age’ he is reduced to opening the letter which I left for him in the card-rack.”

“How? did you put anything particular in it?”

- “Why—it did not seem altogether right to leave the interior blank—that would have been insulting. D—, at Vienna once, did me an evil turn, which I told him quite good-humoredly, that I should remember. So, as I knew he  
15 would feel some curiosity in regard to the identity of the person who had outwitted him, I thought it a pity not to give him a clew. He is well acquainted with my MS., and I just copied into the middle of the blank sheet the words—

‘— Un dessein si funeste,  
S’il n’est digne d’Atrée, est digne de Thyeste.’

- 20 They are to be found in Crébillon’s *Atrée*.”

## DREAM-LAND

“Dream-Land” was originally published in *Graham’s Magazine* for June, 1844, and later gathered into the 1845 volume. The 1845 text is here followed.

By a route obscure and lonely,  
Haunted by ill angels only,  
Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,  
On a black throne reigns upright,  
I have reached these lands but newly 5  
From an ultimate dim Thule—  
From a wild weird clime that lieth, sublime,  
Out of SPACE—out of TIME.

Bottomless vales and boundless floods,  
And chasms, and caves, and Titan woods,

With forms that no man can discover 11  
For the dews that drip all over;  
Mountains toppling evermore  
Into seas without a shore;  
Seas that restlessly aspire, 15  
Surging, unto skies of fire;  
Lakes that endlessly outspread  
Their lone waters—lone and dead,—  
Their still waters—still and chilly  
With the snows of the lolling lily. 20

By the lakes that thus outspread  
Their lone waters, lone and dead,—  
Their sad waters, sad and chilly  
With the snows of the lolling lily,—  
By the mountains—near the river 25  
Murmuring lowly, murmuring ever,—  
By the grey woods,—by the swamp  
Where the toad and the newt encamp,—

4. *facilis* . . . —easy [is] the descent to Avernus. Virgil, *Aeneid*, vi, v. 125. 5. *Catalani*—Angelica Catalini (1780-1849) was one of the greatest operatic singers of the day. 7. *monstrum horrendum*—horrid monstrosity—a tag from Virgil, *Aeneid*, iii, v. 658. 18-19. “Un dessein . . . Thyeste”—“A plan so mournful is worthy of Thyestes, if it is not worthy of Atræus.”—Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon (1674-1762), an important if secondary writer of French classical tragedies, produced *Atrée* (*Atræus*) in 1707. 3. *Eidolon*—specter. Poe apparently wishes the accent shifted from the second syllable to the first. 6. *ultimate dim Thule*—from the Latin *ultima Thule*, the farthest known land. 10. *Titan*—not merely gigantic, but eldest.

By the dismal tarns and pools Where dwell the Ghouls,—	30	But the traveller, travelling through it, May not—dare not openly view it; Never its mysteries are exposed	45
By each spot the most unholy— In each nook most melancholy,— There the traveller meets, aghast, Sheeted Memories of the Past— Shrouded forms that start and sigh	35	To the weak human eye unclosed; So wills its King, who hath forbid The uplifting of the fringed lid; And thus the sad Soul that here passes Beholds it but through darkened glasses.	50
As they pass the wanderer by— White-robed forms of friends long given, In agony, to the Earth—and Heaven.		By a route obscure and lonely, Haunted by ill angels only, Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT, On a black throne reigns upright, I have wandered home but newly	55
For the heart whose woes are legion 'Tis a peaceful, soothing region— For the spirit that walks in shadow 'Tis—oh 'tis an Eldorado!	40	From this ultimate dim Thule.	

## THE RAVEN

"The Raven" first appeared in the *Evening Mirror*, January 29, 1845. On the sources of the poem consult Woodberry, *The Life of Edgar Allan Poe*, Vol. II, pp. 111 ff.; and Allen, *Israfel*, Vol. II, pp. 608 ff. In *Graham's Magazine* for April, 1846, Poe published "The Philosophy of Composition," which purports to explain how he wrote the poem, an ingenious but somewhat unveracious account. The text here reproduced is that of the 1845 volume.

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,  
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,  
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,  
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.  
" 'Tis some visiter," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—  
Only this, and nothing more." 5

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,  
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.  
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow  
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore— 10  
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—  
Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain  
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;  
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating, 15  
" 'Tis some visiter entreating entrance at my chamber door—  
Some late visiter entreating entrance at my chamber door;—  
This it is and nothing more."

30. **Ghouls**—evil spirits supposed to prey on corpses. 42. **Eldorado**—literally, "the gilded one." According to legend, an Indian king bathed daily in gold dust somewhere in the far west; hence, by transfer, the region or city over which he ruled; hence, any desirable and unattainable paradise. 8. **wrought its ghost**—that is, was reflected upon the floor.

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,  
 "Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;  
 But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,  
 And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,  
 That I scarce was sure I heard you"—here I opened wide the door;—  
 Darkness there, and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,  
 Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;  
 But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,  
 And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore!"  
 This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore!"  
 Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,  
 Soon I heard again a tapping somewhat louder than before.  
 "Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice;  
 Let me see, then, what thetreat is, and this mystery explore—  
 Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore;—  
 'Tis the wind and nothing more!"

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,  
 In there stepped a stately raven of the saintly days of yore;  
 Not the least obeisance made he; not an instant stopped or stayed he;  
 But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door—  
 Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—  
 Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,  
 By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,  
 "Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,  
 Ghastly grim and ancient raven wandering from the Nightly shore—  
 Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!"  
 Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marveled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,  
 Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;  
 For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being  
 Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—  
 Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,  
 With such name as "Nevermore."

But the raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only  
 That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.  
 Nothing farther then he uttered—not a feather then he fluttered—  
 Till I scarcely more than muttered "Other friends have flown before—  
 On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my hopes have flown before."  
 Then the bird said, "Nevermore."

41. *Pallas*—Pallas Athene, the goddess of wisdom. There is a tradition that Poe's first conception centered in an owl, associated especially with Pallas. 47. *Plutonian*—infernal.

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,  
 "Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store  
 Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster  
 Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore—  
 Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore  
 Of 'Never—nevermore.'"

65

But the raven still beguiling all my sad soul into smiling,  
 Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and bust and door;  
 Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking  
 Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—  
 What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore  
 Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

70

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing  
 To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;  
 This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining  
 On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamplight gloated o'er,  
 But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight gloating o'er,  
*She* shall press, ah, nevermore!

75

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer  
 Swung by angels whose faint foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.  
 "Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he hath sent thee  
 Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore!  
 Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!"  
 Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."

80

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!—  
 Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,  
 Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—  
 On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore—  
 Is there—*is* there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me, I implore!"  
 Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."

85

90

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!  
 By that Heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore—  
 Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,  
 It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—  
 Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."  
 Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."

95

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I shrieked, upstarting—  
 "Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore!  
 Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!  
 Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my door!  
 Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!"  
 Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."

100

77. *gloating*—Among the rare meanings of "gloat" is to refract light. 80. *Swung . . . floor*—This line often appears as "Swung by seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor." Poe's definitive reading, however, is presumably established by the 1845 text. The incapacity of foot-falls to tinkle has often been commented upon. 89. *balm in Gilead*—See Jer. 8: 22. 93. *Aidenn*—spelling of Eden forced by the rhyme.

And the raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting  
 On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;  
 And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,  
 And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;  
 And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor  
 Shall be lifted—nevermore!

## ULALUME

"Ulalume" first appeared in the *American Whig Review* for December, 1847, and was reprinted in the *Home Journal*, January 1, 1848, and the *Literary World*, March 3, 1849. At first the poem contained a tenth stanza as follows:

Said *we*, then—the two, then—"Ah, can it  
 Have been that the woodlandish ghouls,  
 The pitiful, the merciless ghouls—  
 To bar up our way and to ban it  
 From the secret that lies in these wolds—  
 From the thing that lies hidden in these  
 wolds—

Had drawn up the spectre of a planet  
 From the limbo of lunary souls,  
 This sinfully scintillant planet  
 From the Hell of the planetary souls?"

This stanza was abandoned in 1849, and by Griswold in his edition of Poe's *Works* (1850), from which the present text is derived. In the first version the poem was subtitled "To ———." Poe himself referred to it as a ballad.

The skies they were ashen and sober;  
 The leaves they were crisped and sere—  
 The leaves they were withering and sere;  
 It was night in the lonesome October  
 Of my most immemorial year;  
 It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,  
 In the misty mid region of Weir—

It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,  
 In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

Here once, through an alley Titanic,  
 Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul—  
 Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.  
 These were days when my heart was vol-  
 canic

As the scoriac rivers that roll—  
 As the lavas that restlessly roll  
 Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek  
 In the ultimate climes of the Pole—  
 That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek  
 In the realms of the boreal pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober,  
 But our thoughts they were palsied and  
 sere—

Our memories were treacherous and sere—  
 For we knew not the month was October,  
 And we marked not the night of the  
 year—

(Ah, night of all nights in the year!)  
 We noted not the dim lake of Auber—  
 (Though once we had journeyed down  
 here)—

Remembered not the dank tarn of Auber,  
 Nor the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

And now, as the night was senescent  
 And star-dials pointed to morn—  
 As the star-dials hinted of morn—  
 At the end of our path a liquescent  
 And nebulous lustre was born,

106. **lamplight** . . . **shadow**—Poe's conception here is of a bracket candelabrum affixed to the wall above the door and the bust, as is sometimes seen in English palaces and in some New York houses contemporary with Poe. 2. **crisped**—two syllables. 5. **immemorial**—here, Poe probably means memorable, unforgettable. 6-7. **Auber** . . . **Weir**—poetic geography. 10. **Titanic**—with the combined ideas of huge and very old. 14. **scoriac**—slaglike. Poe is apparently the first to use this word. 16. **Yaanek**—more poetic geography. 17. **ultimate**—verbal echo of *ultima Thule*, the last edge of the world. 19. **boreal**—literally, northern, but the "atmosphere" of the word here is simply that of vague and distant cold. 30. **senescent**—Latin, *senescens*; growing old. 31. **star-dials**—the stars considered as means of measuring time.

Out of which a miraculous crescent 35  
 Arose with a duplicate horn—  
 Astarte's bediamonded crescent  
 Distinct with its duplicate horn.

And I said—"She is warmer than Dian:  
 She rolls through an ether of sighs— 40  
 She revels in a region of sighs:

She has seen that the tears are not dry on  
 These cheeks, where the worm never dies,  
 And has come past the stars of the Lion  
 To point us the path to the skies— 45  
 To the Lethean peace of the skies—  
 Come up, in despite of the Lion,  
 To shine on us with her bright eyes—  
 Come up through the lair of the Lion,  
 With love in her luminous eyes." 50

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,  
 Said—"Sadly this star I mistrust—  
 Her pallor I strangely mistrust:—  
 Oh, hasten!—oh, let us not linger!  
 Oh, fly!—let us fly!—for we must." 55  
 In terror she spoke, letting sink her  
 Wings till they trailed in the dust—  
 In agony sobbed, letting sink her  
 Plumes till they trailed in the dust— 59  
 Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust.

I replied—"This is nothing but dreaming:  
 Let us on by this tremulous light!  
 Let us bathe in this crystalline light!  
 Its Sibyllic splendor is beaming  
 With Hope and in Beauty to-night:— 65  
 See!—it flickers up the sky through the  
 night!  
 Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,  
 And be sure it will lead us aright—  
 We safely may trust to a gleaming  
 That cannot but guide us aright, 70  
 Since it flickers up to Heaven through the  
 night."

Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,  
 And tempted her out of her gloom—

And conquered her scruples and gloom;  
 And we passed to the end of the vista, 75  
 But were stopped by the door of a tomb—  
 By the door of a legended tomb;  
 And I said—"What is written, sweet sister,  
 On the door of this legended tomb?"  
 She replied—"Ulalume—Ulalume— 80  
 'Tis the vault of thy lost Ulalume!"

Then my heart it grew ashen and sober  
 As the leaves that were crisped and sere—  
 As the leaves that were withering and sere,  
 And I cried—"It was surely October 85  
 On *this* very night of last year  
 That I journeyed—I journeyed down  
 here—  
 That I brought a dread burden down  
 here—  
 On this night of all nights in the year, 89  
 Ah, what demon has tempted me here?  
 Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber—  
 This misty mid region of Weir—  
 Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber,  
 This ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir."

## ELDORADO

This poem first appeared in *Flag of Our Union*, April 21, 1849. The present text follows that of Griswold (1850). On the derivation of "Eldorado" see note to line 42 of "Dream-Land" (page 763).

Gaily bedight,  
 A gallant knight,  
 In sunshine and in shadow,  
 Had journeyed long,  
 Singing a song, 5  
 In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old—  
 This knight so bold—  
 And o'er his heart a shadow

37. *Astarte's . . . crescent*—Astarte, a Phrygian goddess associated with the moon, and especially with the horned moon, is in certain aspects the goddess of earthly, or impure, love, and is here in contrast to Dian (Diana), the virgin huntress, type of chaste love. 44. *stars of the Lion*—the constellation Leo. Poe was inordinately fond of astronomical lore. Here the constellation is also vaguely associated with the function of Leo as one of the houses, or signs, of the zodiac in astrology. 52. *this star*—that is, the moon, not properly a star. 64. *Sibyllic*—more commonly, Sibylline; oracular, mysterious in a good sense.



Fell as he found  
No spot of ground  
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength  
Failed him at length,  
He met a pilgrim shadow—  
"Shadow," said he,  
"Where can it be—  
This land of Eldorado?"

"Over the Mountains  
Of the Moon,  
Down the Valley of the Shadow,  
Ride, boldly ride,"  
The shade replied,—  
"If you seek for Eldorado!"

### ANNABEL LEE

This poem first appeared in the *New York Tribune*, October 9, 1849. The present text is that of Poe's manuscript preserved at the Henry E. Huntington Library, and there exhibited.

It was many and many a year ago,  
In a kingdom by the sea,  
That a maiden there lived whom you may  
know  
By the name of Annabel Lee;  
And this maiden she lived with no other  
thought  
Than to love and be loved by me. 5

*She* was a child and *I* was a child,  
In this kingdom by the sea;  
But we loved with a love that was more than  
love—  
I and my Annabel Lee— 10

10 With a love that the wingèd seraphs of  
heaven  
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,  
In this kingdom by the sea,  
15 A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling 15  
My beautiful Annabel Lee—  
So that her highborn kinsmen came  
And bore her away from me,  
To shut her up in a sepulchre  
In this kingdom by the sea. 20

The angels, not half so happy in Heaven,  
Went envying her and me:—  
Yes, that was the reason (as all men know,  
In this kingdom by the sea)  
That the wind came out of the cloud by night  
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee. 26

But our love it was stronger by far than the  
love  
Of those who were older than we—  
Of many far wiser than we—  
And neither the angels in Heaven above, 30  
Nor the demons down under the sea,  
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul  
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee:—

For the moon never beams, without bringing  
me dreams  
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee; 35  
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright  
eyes  
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;  
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the  
side  
Of my darling, my darling, my life and my  
bride  
In her sepulchre there by the sea— 40  
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

### THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO

This story first appeared in *Godey's Lady's Book* for November, 1846, whence it was collected into Griswold's edition of the *Works* (1850). Griswold's version differs in a number of minor details from the magazine version, but what authority

19-20. *Mountains of the Moon*—The Mountains of the Moon are in northern Africa, but Poe is here using the phrase as poetic geography connoting any remote, impossible place.

there is for these changes does not appear. The present text is therefore that of *Godey's Lady's Book*.

THE THOUSAND injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could; but when he ventured upon insult, I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. *At length* I would be avenged: this was a point definitively settled—but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved precluded the idea of risk. I must not only punish, but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.

It must be understood that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good will. I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile *now* was at the thought of his immolation.

He had a weak point—this Fortunato—although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine. Few Italians have the true virtuoso spirit. For the most part their enthusiasm is adopted to suit the time and opportunity—to practice imposture upon the British and Austrian *millionaires*. In painting and gemmery, Fortunato, like his countrymen, was a quack—but in the matter of old wines he was sincere. In this respect I did not differ from him materially;—I was skilful in the Italian vintages myself, and bought largely whenever I could.

It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much. The man wore motley. He had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells. I was so pleased to see him that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand.

I said to him—"My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking to-day. But I have received a pipe of what passes for Amontillado, and I have my doubts."

"How?" said he. "Amontillado? A pipe? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival!"

"I have my doubts," I replied; "and I was silly enough to pay the full Amontillado price without consulting you in the matter. You were not to be found, and I was fearful of losing a bargain."

"Amontillado!"

"I have my doubts."

"Amontillado!"

"And I must satisfy them."

"Amontillado!"

"As you are engaged, I am on my way to Luchresi. If any one has a critical turn, it is he. He will tell me—"

16. *virtuoso*—connoisseur, skillful practitioner. 18. *gemmery*—the science of gems. 30. *Amontillado*—Amontillado is a dry sherry coming from Montilla, in Spain. 31. *pipe*—small barrel. 41. *Luchresi*—For some unknown reason, Griswold, and many subsequent editors, have changed the name to "Luchesi."

"Luchresi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry."

"And yet some fools will have it that his taste is a match for your own."

"Come, let us go."

5 "Whither?"

"To your vaults."

"My friend, no; I will not impose upon your good nature. I perceive you have an engagement. Luchresi—"

"I have no engagement;—come."

10 "My friend, no. It is not the engagement, but the severe cold with which I perceive you are afflicted. The vaults are insufferably damp. They are incrustated with nitre."

"Let us go, nevertheless. The cold is merely nothing. Amontillado! You have been imposed upon. And as for Luchresi, he cannot distinguish Sherry from  
15 Amontillado."

Thus speaking, Fortunato possessed himself of my arm. Putting on a mask of black silk, and drawing a *roquelaire* closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo.

There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to make merry in  
20 honour of the time. I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them explicit orders not to stir from the house. These orders were sufficient, I well knew, to insure their immediate disappearance, one and all, as soon as my back was turned.

I took from their sconces two flambeaus, and giving one to Fortunato, bowed  
25 him through several suites of rooms to the archway that led into the vaults. I passed down a long and winding staircase, requesting him to be cautious as he followed. We came at length to the foot of the descent, and stood together on the damp ground of the catacombs of the Montresors.

The gait of my friend was unsteady, and the bells upon his cap jingled as he  
30 strode.

"The pipe," said he.

"It is farther on," said I; "but observe the white web-work which gleams from these cavern walls."

He turned towards me, and looked into my eyes with two filmy orbs that  
35 distilled the rheum of intoxication.

"Nitre?" he asked at length.

"Nitre," I replied. "How long have you had that cough?"

"Ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—  
ugh! ugh! ugh!"

40 My poor friend found it impossible to reply for many minutes.

"It is nothing," he said, at last.

"Come," I said, with decision, "we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back; you will be  
45 ill, and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchresi—"

17. *roquelaire*—short cloak. 18. *palazzo*—literally, palace—the house of a wealthy person.

"Enough," he said; "the cough is a mere nothing; it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough."

"True—true," I replied; "and, indeed, I had no intention of alarming you unnecessarily—but you should use all proper caution. A draught of this Medoc will defend us from the damp." 5

Here I knocked off the neck of a bottle which I drew from a long row of its fellows that lay upon the mould.

"Drink," I said, presenting him the wine.

He raised it to his lips with a leer. He paused and nodded to me familiarly, while his bells jingled. 10

"I drink," he said, "to the buried that repose around us."

"And I to your long life."

He again took my arm, and we proceeded.

"These vaults," he said, "are extensive."

"The Montresors," I replied, "were a great and numerous family." 15

"I forget your arms."

"A huge human foot d'or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are embedded in the heel."

"And the motto?"

"*Nemo me impune lacessit.*" 20

"Good!" he said.

The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc. We had passed through long walls of piled skeletons, with casks and puncheons intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm 25 above the elbow.

"The nitre!" I said; "see, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river's bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back ere it is too late. Your cough—"

"It is nothing," he said; "let us go on. But first, another draught of the 30 Medoc."

I broke and reached him a flagon of De Grève. He emptied it at a breath. His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed and threw the bottle upwards with a gesticulation I did not understand.

I looked at him in surprise. He repeated the movement—a grotesque one. 35

"You do not comprehend?" he said.

"Not I," I replied.

"Then you are not of the brotherhood."

"How?"

"You are not of the masons." 40

4. **Medoc**—properly *Médoc*—wine from a particular region on the Gironde River in France. The inferior wine from this region is known simply as *Médoc*; the superior brands have particular names. Hence, Fortunato's acceptance of *Médoc* without comment is a mark of his intoxication. 17. **foot . . . azure**—heraldic language meaning a golden foot on a blue field. 17. **rampant**—erect. 20. "*Nemo . . .*"—"No one attacks me with impunity." Poe apparently took the motto from the royal arms of Scotland. 23. **long walls**—"walls" (1850). 23. **skeletons**—"bones" (1850). 32. **De Grève**—Properly, Grèves, a mild wine from Bordeaux, which could scarcely have made Fortunato's "eyes flash with a fierce light." Poe's knowledge is at fault.

"Yes, yes," I said; "yes, yes."

"You? Impossible! A mason?"

"A mason," I replied.

"A sign," he said, "a sign."

5 "It is this," I answered, producing from beneath the folds of my *roquelaire*, a trowel.

"You jest," he exclaimed, recoiling a few paces. "But let us proceed to the Amontillado."

"Be it so," I said, replacing the tool beneath the cloak, and again offering  
10 him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily. We continued our route in search of the Amontillado. We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and, descending again, arrived at a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaus rather to glow than flame.

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another less spacious.  
15 Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth side the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size. Within the wall thus exposed by the displacing of the  
20 bones, we perceived a still interior crypt or recess, in depth about four feet, in width three, in height six or seven. It seemed to have been constructed for no especial use within itself, but formed merely the interval between two of the colossal supports of the roof of the catacombs, and was backed by one of their circumscribing walls of solid granite.

25 It was in vain that Fortunato, uplifting his dull torch, endeavoured to pry into the depth of the recess. Its termination the feeble light did not enable us to see.

"Proceed," I said; "herein is the Amontillado. As for Luchresi—"

"He is an ignoramus," interrupted my friend, as he stepped unsteadily forward, while I followed immediately at his heels. In an instant he had reached  
30 the extremity of the niche, and finding his progress arrested by the rock, stood stupidly bewildered. A moment more and I had fettered him to the granite. In its surface were two iron staples, distant from each other about two feet, horizontally. From one of these depended a short chain, from the other a padlock.  
35 Throwing the links about his waist, it was but the work of a few seconds to secure it. He was too much astounded to resist. Withdrawing the key, I stepped back from the recess.

"Pass your hand," I said, "over the wall; you cannot help feeling the nitre. Indeed it is *very* damp. Once more let me *implore* you to return. No? Then I  
40 must positively leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power."

"The Amontillado!" ejaculated my friend, not yet recovered from his astonishment.

4. he said—1850 omits the second "a sign." 5-6. 1850 transposes the phrases "a trowel" and "from . . . roquelaire." 16. catacombs of Paris—The catacombs of Paris, later in construction than those in Italy, were used for burial purposes as late as the eighteenth century. 17. fourth side—"fourth" (1850). 20. crypt or—1850 omits.

"True," I replied; "the Amontillado."

As I said these words I busied myself among the pile of bones of which I have before spoken. Throwing them aside, I soon uncovered a quantity of building stone and mortar. With these materials and with the aid of my trowel, I began vigorously to wall up the entrance of the niche.

I had scarcely laid the first tier of the masonry when I discovered that the intoxication of Fortunato had in a great measure worn off. The earliest indication I had of this was a low moaning cry from the depth of the recess. It was *not* the cry of a drunken man. There was then a long and obstinate silence. I laid the second tier, and the third, and the fourth; and then I heard the furious vibrations of the chain. The noise lasted for several minutes, during which, that I might hearken to it with the more satisfaction, I ceased my labours and sat down upon the bones. When at last the clanking subsided, I resumed the trowel, and finished without interruption the fifth, the sixth, and the seventh tier. The wall was now nearly upon a level with my breast. I again paused, and holding the flambeau over the mason work, threw a few feeble rays upon the figure within.

A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back. For a brief moment I hesitated, I trembled. Unsheathing my rapier, I began to grope with it about the recess; but the thought of an instant reassured me. I placed my hand upon the solid fabric of the catacombs, and felt satisfied. I reapproached the wall; I replied to the yells of him who clamoured. I re-echoed, I aided, I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamor grew still.

It was now midnight, and my task was drawing to a close. I had completed the eighth, the ninth, and the tenth tier. I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in. I struggled with its weight; I placed it partially in its destined position. But now there came from out the niche a low laugh that erected the hairs upon my head. It was succeeded by a sad voice, which I had difficulty in recognizing as that of the noble Fortunato. The voice said—

"Ha! ha! ha!—he! he! he!—a very good joke, indeed—an excellent jest. We will have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo—he! he! he!—over our wine—he! he! he!"

"The Amontillado!" I said.

"He! he! he!—he! he! he!—yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at the palazzo, the Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us be gone."

"Yes," I said, "let us be gone."

"*For the love of God, Montresor!*"

"Yes," I said, "for the love of God!"

But to these words I hearkened in vain for a reply. I grew impatient. I called aloud—

"Fortunato!"

No answer. I called again—

"Fortunato!"

No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it

fall within. There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells. My heart grew sick; it was the dampness of the catacombs that made it so. I hastened to make an end of my labour. I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones. For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. *In pace requiescat.*

## [ HAWTHORNE'S TWICE-TOLD TALES ]

Although only the second and longer portion of Poe's review of Hawthorne's stories is usually reprinted, that author began his notice of his great contemporary in *Graham's Magazine* for April, 1842, and returned to the subject in the May number. The first discussion forms an appropriate prelude to the second, and better-known, essay for the reason that it sets the book in its contemporary background. Moreover, some of Poe's characteristic thrusts at cheap contemporary literature, his delight in finding a truly "original" author, and the compliment to Irving are found in the opening remarks. The part of the review down to the division line is the part which first appeared.

*Twice-Told Tales.* By Nathaniel Hawthorne. James Munroe & Co.: Boston.

WE HAVE always regarded the *Tale* (using this word in its popular acceptance) as affording the best prose opportunity for display of the highest talent. It has peculiar advantages which the novel does not admit. It is, of course, a far finer field than the essay. It has even points of  
 10 superiority over the poem. An accident has deprived us, this month, of our customary space for review; and thus nipped in the bud a design long cherished of treating this subject in detail; taking Mr. Hawthorne's volumes as a text. In May we shall endeavor to carry out our intention. At present we are forced to be brief.

15 With rare exception—in the case of Mr. Irving's "Tales of a Traveller" and a few other works of a like cast—we have had no American tales of high merit. We have had no skilful compositions—nothing which could bear examination as works of art. Of twattle called tale-writing we have had, perhaps, more than enough. We have had a superabundance of the Rosa-Matilda effusions—gilt-  
 20 edged paper all *couleur de rose*: a full allowance of cut-and-thrust blue-blazing melodramaticisms; a nauseating surfe[i]t of low miniature copying of low life, much in the manner, and with about half the merit, of the Dutch herrings and decayed cheeses of Van Tuyssel—of all this *eheu jam satis!*

Mr. Hawthorne's volumes appear to us misnamed in two respects. In the  
 25 first place they should not have been called "Twice-Told Tales"—for this is a title which will not bear *repetition*. If in the first collected edition they were

2. it was—"on account of" (1850). 2. that made it so—1850 omits. 5. *In pace requiescat*—May he rest in peace—an inscription frequently carved on tombstones. 15. Irving's "Tales . . ."—published first in 1824. 19. Rosa-Matilda—a hit at the sentimental romanticism of the "Della Cruscan" order. "Anna Matilda" was the poetic signature of Hannah Cowley (1758-1800), and the fashion of names thus set was widely imitated. 20. *couleur de rose*—rose-color. 23. Van Tuyssel—No such Dutch painter is known. The name is apparently an invention of Poe's. 23. *eheu jam satis!*—alas, now enough!

twice-told, of course now they are thrice told. May we live to hear them told a hundred times! In the second place, these compositions are by no means *all* "Tales." The most of them are essays properly so called. It would have been wise in their author to have modified his title, so as to have had reference to all included. This point could have been easily arranged.

But under whatever titular blunders we receive this book, it is most cordially welcome. We have seen no prose composition by any American which can compare with *some* of these articles in the higher merits, or indeed in the lower; while there is not a single piece which would do dishonor to the best of the British essayists.

"The Rill from the Town Pump" which, through the *ad captandum* nature of its title, has attracted more of public notice than any other of Mr. Hawthorne's compositions, is perhaps, the *least* meritorious. Among the best, we may briefly mention "The Hollow of the Three Hills;" "The Minister's Black Veil;" "Wakefield;" "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe;" "Fancy's Show-Box;" "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment;" "David Swan;" "The Wedding Knell;" and "The White Old Maid." It is remarkable that all these, with one exception, are from the first volume.

The style of Mr. Hawthorne is purity itself. His *tone* is singularly effective—wild, plaintive, thoughtful, and in full accordance with his themes. We have only to object that there is insufficient diversity in these themes themselves, or rather in their character. His *originality* both of incident and of reflection is very remarkable; and this trait alone would ensure him at least *our* warmest regard and commendation. We speak here chiefly of the tales; the essays are not so markedly novel. Upon the whole we look upon him as one of the few men of indisputable genius to whom our country has as yet given birth. As such, it will be our delight to do him honor; and lest, in these undigested and cursory remarks, we should appear to do him *more* honor than is his due, we postpone all farther comment until a more favorable opportunity.

We said a few hurried words about Mr. Hawthorne in our last number, with the design of speaking more fully in the present. We are still, however, pressed for room, and must necessarily discuss his volumes more briefly and more at random than their high merits deserve.

The book professes to be a collection of *tales*, yet is, in two respects, misnamed. These pieces are now in their third republication, and, of course, are thrice-told. Moreover, they are by no means *all* tales, either in the ordinary or in the legitimate understanding of the term. Many of them are pure essays; for example, "Sights from a Steeple," "Sunday at Home," "Little Annie's Ramble," "A Rill from the Town Pump," "The Toll-Gatherer's Day," "The Haunted Mind," "The Sister Years," "Snow-Flakes," "Night Sketches," and "Foot-Prints on the Sea-Shore." We mention these matters chiefly on account

11. *ad captandum*—"catchy." 18. *first volume*—This also contains "The Gray Champion" and "The Gentle Boy"; and the second volume includes "Lady Eleanore's Mantle," "The Ambitious Guest," and "Edward Fane's Rosebud" among the better-known stories. 35. *third republication*—The first collected edition of *Twice-Told Tales* was 1837; the second, 1842.



of their discrepancy with that marked precision and finish by which the body of the work is distinguished.

Of the essays just named, we must be content to speak in brief. They are each and all beautiful, without being characterized by the polish and adaptation so visible in the tales proper. A painter would at once note their leading or predominant feature, and style it *repose*. There is no attempt at effect. All is quiet, thoughtful, subdued. Yet this repose may exist simultaneously with high originality of thought; and Mr. Hawthorne has demonstrated the fact. At every turn we meet with novel combinations; yet these combinations never surpass the limits of the quiet. We are soothed as we read; and withal is a calm astonishment that ideas so apparently obvious have never occurred or been presented to us before. Herein our author differs materially from Lamb or Hunt or Hazlitt—who, with vivid originality of manner and expression, have less of the true novelty of thought than is generally supposed, and whose originality, at best, has an uneasy and meretricious quaintness, replete with startling effects unfounded in nature, and inducing trains of reflection which lead to no satisfactory result. The Essays of Hawthorne have much of the character of Irving, with more of originality, and less of finish; while, compared with the Spectator, they have a vast superiority at all points. The Spectator, Mr. Irving, and Mr. Hawthorne have in common that tranquil and subdued manner which we have chosen to denominate *repose*; but, in the case of the two former, this repose is attained rather by the absence of novel combination, or of originality, than otherwise, and consists chiefly in the calm, quiet, unostentatious expression of commonplace thoughts, in an unambitious, unadulterated Saxon. In them, by strong effort, we are made to conceive the absence of all. In the essays before us the absence of effort is too obvious to be mistaken, and a strong undercurrent of *suggestion* runs continuously beneath the upper stream of the tranquil thesis. In short, these effusions of Mr. Hawthorne are the product of a truly imaginative intellect, restrained, and in some measure repressed, by fastidiousness of taste, by constitutional melancholy, and by indolence.

But it is of his tales that we desire principally to speak. The tale proper, in our opinion, affords unquestionably the fairest field for the exercise of the loftiest talent, which can be afforded by the wide domains of mere prose. Were we bidden to say how the highest genius could be most advantageously employed for the best display of its own powers, we should answer, without hesitation—in the composition of a rhymed poem, not to exceed in length what might be perused in an hour. Within this limit alone can the highest order of true poetry exist. We need only here say, upon this topic, that, in almost all classes of composition, the unity of effect or impression is a point of the greatest importance. It is clear, moreover, that this unity cannot be thoroughly preserved in productions whose perusal cannot be completed at one sitting. We

12-13. Lamb . . . Hunt . . . Hazlitt—Poe reviewed a life of Hazlitt in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, September, 1836, in which he said Hazlitt, though deficient in imagination, was perhaps unequalled as a critic. Of Hazlitt's *The Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* he said (*Broadway Journal*, Aug. 16, 1845) Hazlitt was "the best commentator who ever wrote in English." In the same magazine (Aug. 30, 1845), he said of Hunt that "he has insufficient stimulus" and was "fit for very little." Poe has little to say about Lamb.

may continue the reading of a prose composition, from the very nature of prose itself, much longer than we can persevere, to any good purpose, in the perusal of a poem. This latter, if truly fulfilling the demands of the poetic sentiment, induces an exaltation of the soul which cannot be long sustained. All high excitements are necessarily transient. Thus a long poem is a paradox. And, without unity of impression, the deepest effects cannot be brought about. Epics were the offspring of an imperfect sense of Art, and their reign is no more. A poem *too* brief may produce a vivid, but never an intense or enduring impression. Without a certain continuity of effort—without a certain duration or repetition of purpose—the soul is never deeply moved. There must be the dropping of the water upon the rock. De Béranger has wrought brilliant things—pungent and spirit-stirring—but, like all immassive bodies, they lack *momentum*, and thus fail to satisfy the Poetic Sentiment. They sparkle and excite, but, from want of continuity, fail deeply to impress. Extreme brevity will degenerate into epigrammatism; but the sin of extreme length is even more unpardonable. *In medio tutissimus ibis.*

Were we called upon, however, to designate that class of composition which, next to such a poem as we have suggested, should best fulfil the demands of high genius—should offer it the most advantageous field of exertion—we should unhesitatingly speak of the prose tale, as Mr. Hawthorne has here exemplified it. We allude to the short prose narrative, requiring from a half-hour to one or two hours in its perusal. The ordinary novel is objectionable, from its length, for reasons already stated in substance. As it cannot be read at one sitting, it deprives itself, of course, of the immense force derivable from *totality*. Worldly interests intervening during the pauses of perusal, modify, annul, or counteract, in a greater or less degree, the impressions of the book. But simple cessation in reading would, of itself, be sufficient to destroy the true unity. In the brief tale, however, the author is enabled to carry out the fulness of his intention, be it what it may. During the hour of perusal the soul of the reader is at the writer's control. There are no external or extrinsic influences—resulting from weariness or interruption.

A skilful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single *effect* to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents—he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence tend not to the outbringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design. And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it with a kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction. The idea of the tale has been presented unblemished, because undisturbed: and this is an end unattainable by the novel. Undue brevity is just as exceptionable here as in the poem; but undue length is yet more to be avoided.

We have said that the tale has a point of superiority even over the poem.

11. De Béranger—*Cf.* note to motto of "The Fall of the House of Usher," p. 712. 16. In *medio* . . . —You shall be most secure in some middle ground.

In fact, while the *rhythm* of this latter is an essential aid in the development of the poem's highest idea—the idea of the Beautiful—the artificialities of this rhythm are an inseparable bar to the development of all points of thought or expression which have their basis in *Truth*. But Truth is often, and in very  
 5 great degree, the aim of the tale. Some of the finest tales are tales of ratiocination. Thus the field of this species of composition, if not in so elevated a region on the mountain of Mind, is a table-land of far vaster extent than the domain of the mere poem. Its products are never so rich, but infinitely more numerous, and more appreciable by the mass of mankind. The writer of the prose tale, in  
 10 short, may bring to his theme a vast variety of modes or inflections of thought and expression—(the ratiocinative, for example, the sarcastic, or the humorous) which are not only antagonistical to the nature of the poem, but absolutely forbidden by one of its most peculiar and indispensable adjuncts; we allude, of course, to rhythm. It may be added here, *par parenthèse*, that the author who  
 15 aims at the purely beautiful in a prose tale is laboring at a great disadvantage. For Beauty can be better treated in the poem. Not so with terror, or passion, or horror, or a multitude of such other points. And here it will be seen how full of prejudice are the usual animadversions against those *tales of effect*, many fine examples of which were found in the earlier numbers of *Blackwood*. The im-  
 20 pressions produced were wrought in a legitimate sphere of action, and constituted a legitimate although sometimes an exaggerated interest. They were relished by every man of genius: although there were found many men of genius who condemned them without just ground. The true critic will but demand that the design intended be accomplished, to the fullest extent, by the  
 25 means most advantageously applicable.

We have very few American tales of real merit—we may say, indeed, none, with the exception of "The Tales of a Traveller" of Washington Irving, and these "Twice-Told Tales" of Mr. Hawthorne. Some of the pieces of Mr. John  
 30 Neal abound in vigor and originality; but, in general, his compositions of this class are excessively diffuse, extravagant, and indicative of an imperfect sentiment of Art. Articles at random are, now and then, met with in our periodicals which might be advantageously compared with the best effusions of the British Magazines; but, upon the whole, we are far behind our progenitors in this department of literature.

35 Of Mr. Hawthorne's tales we would say, emphatically, that they belong to the highest region of Art—an Art subservient to genius of a very lofty order. We had supposed, with good reason for so supposing, that he had been thrust into his present position by one of the impudent *cliques* which beset our literature, and whose pretensions it is our full purpose to expose at the earliest op-  
 40 portunity; but we have been most agreeably mistaken. We know of few compositions which the critic can more honestly commend than these "Twice-Told Tales." As Americans, we feel proud of the book.

Mr. Hawthorne's distinctive trait is invention, creation, imagination, orig-

14. *par parenthèse*—by way of parenthesis. 19. *Blackwood*—*Blackwood's Edinburgh Monthly Magazine*, founded 1817, notable for the amount of romantic fiction in its earlier volumes. 28-29. John Neal—John Neal (1793-1876), American author of numerous volumes of fiction.

inality—a trait which, in the literature of fiction, is positively worth all the rest. But the nature of the originality, so far as regards its manifestation in letters, is but imperfectly understood. The inventive or original mind as frequently displays itself in novelty of *tone* as in novelty of matter. Mr. Hawthorne is original at *all* points.

It would be a matter of some difficulty to designate the best of these tales; we repeat that, without exception, they are beautiful. "Wakefield" is remarkable for the skill with which an old idea—a well-known incident—is worked up or discussed. A man of whims conceives the purpose of quitting his wife and residing *incognito*, for twenty years, in her immediate neighborhood. Something of this kind actually happened in London. The force of Mr. Hawthorne's tale lies in the analysis of the motives which must or might have impelled the husband to such folly, in the first instance, with the possible causes of his perseverance. Upon this thesis a sketch of singular power has been constructed.

"The Wedding Knell" is full of the boldest imagination—an imagination fully controlled by taste. The most captious critic could find no flaw in this production.

"The Minister's Black Veil" is a masterly composition, of which the sole defect is that to the rabble its exquisite skill will be *caviare*. The *obvious* meaning of this article will be found to smother its insinuated one. The *moral* put into the mouth of the dying minister will be supposed to convey the *true* import of the narrative; and that a crime of dark dye (having reference to the "young lady") has been committed, is a point which only minds congenial with that of the author will perceive.

"Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe" is vividly original, and managed most dexterously.

"Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" is exceedingly well imagined, and executed with surpassing ability. The artist breathes in every line of it.

"The White Old Maid" is objectionable even more than the "Minister's Black Veil," on the score of its mysticism. Even with the thoughtful and analytic, there will be much trouble in penetrating its entire import.

"The Hollow of the Three Hills" we would quote in full had we space;—not as evincing higher talent than any of the other pieces, but as affording an excellent example of the author's peculiar ability. The subject is commonplace. A witch subjects the Distant and the Past to the view of a mourner. It has been the fashion to describe, in such cases, a mirror in which the images of the absent appear; or a cloud of smoke is made to arise, and thence the figures are gradually unfolded. Mr. Hawthorne has wonderfully heightened his effect by making the ear, in place of the eye, the medium by which the fantasy is conveyed. The head of the mourner is enveloped in the cloak of the witch, and within its magic folds there arise sounds which have an all-sufficient intelligence. Throughout this article also, the artist is conspicuous—not more in positive than in negative merits. Not only is all done that should be done, but (what perhaps is an end with more difficulty attained) there is nothing done which

should not be. Every word *tells*, and there is not a word which does *not* tell.

In "Howe's Masquerade" we observe something which resembles plagiarism—but which *may be* a very flattering coincidence of thought. We quote the passage in question.

[Quotation.]

- 5 The idea here is, that the figure in the cloak is the phantom or reduplication of Sir William Howe; but in an article called "William Wilson," one of the "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque," we have not only the same idea, but the same idea similarly presented in several respects. We quote two paragraphs, which our readers may compare with what has been already given. We have  
10 italicized, above, the immediate particulars of resemblance.

[Quotation.]

- Here it will be observed that, not only are the two general conceptions identical, but there are various *points* of similarity. In each case the figure seen is the wraith or duplication of the beholder. In each case the scene is a masquerade. In each case the figure is cloaked. In each, there is a quarrel—that is to  
15 say, angry words pass between the parties. In each the beholder is enraged. In each the cloak and sword fall upon the floor. The "villain, unmuffle yourself," of Mr. H. is precisely paralleled by a passage at page 56 of "William Wilson."

- In the way of objection we have scarcely a word to say of these tales. There  
20 is, perhaps, a somewhat too general or prevalent *tone*—a tone of melancholy and mysticism. The subjects are insufficiently varied. There is not so much of *versatility* evinced as we might well be warranted in expecting from the high powers of Mr. Hawthorne. But beyond these trivial exceptions we have really none to make. The style is purity itself. Force abounds. High imagination  
25 gleams from every page. Mr. Hawthorne is a man of the truest genius. We only regret that the limits of our Magazine will not permit us to pay him that full tribute of commendation, which, under other circumstances, we should be so eager to pay.

Poe returned to this volume of Hawthorne's in an essay contributed to *Godey's Lady's Book* for November, 1847 (Virginia edition of the *Works*, Vol. XIII, pp. 141-55), in which he reprinted his paragraphs about the structure of the short story, and accounted for Hawthorne's lack of popularity by denying him originality, though granting him "peculiarity." The review concludes: "Let him [Hawthorne] mend his pen, get a bottle of visible ink, come out from the Old Manse, cut Mr. Alcott, hang (if possible) the editor of 'The Dial,' and throw out of the window to the pigs all his odd numbers of 'The North American Review.'"

## THE POETIC PRINCIPLE

This essay first appeared in *Sartain's Union Magazine*, October, 1850.

IN SPEAKING of the Poetic Principle, I have no design to be either thorough or profound. While discussing very much at random the essentiality of what we call Poetry, my principal purpose will be to cite for consideration some few of those minor English or American poems which best suit my own taste, or which, upon my own fancy, have left the most definite impression. By "minor poems" I mean, of course, poems of little length. And here, in the beginning, permit me to say a few words in regard to a somewhat peculiar principle, which, whether rightfully or wrongfully, has always had its influence in my own critical estimate of the poem. I hold that a long poem does not exist. I maintain that the phrase, "a long poem," is simply a flat contradiction in terms.

I need scarcely observe that a poem deserves its title only inasmuch as it excites, by elevating the soul. The value of the poem is in the ratio of this elevating excitement. But all excitements are, through a psychal necessity, transient. That degree of excitement which would entitle a poem to be so called at all, cannot be sustained throughout a composition of any great length. After the lapse of half an hour, at the very utmost, it flags—fails—a revulsion ensues—and then the poem is, in effect, and in fact, no longer such.

There are, no doubt, many who have found difficulty in reconciling the critical dictum that the "Paradise Lost" is to be devoutly admired throughout, with the absolute impossibility of maintaining for it, during perusal, the amount of enthusiasm which that critical dictum would demand. This great work, in fact, is to be regarded as poetical only when, losing sight of that vital requisite in all works of Art, Unity, we view it merely as a series of minor poems. If, to preserve its Unity—its totality of effect or impression—we read it (as would be necessary) at a single sitting, the result is but a constant alternation of excitement and depression. After a passage of what we feel to be true poetry, there follows, inevitably, a passage of platitude which no critical pre-judgment can force us to admire; but if, upon completing the work, we read it again, omitting the first book—that is to say, commencing with the second—we shall be surprised at now finding that admirable which we before condemned—that damnable which we had previously so much admired. It follows from all this that the ultimate, aggregate, or absolute effect of even the best epic under the sun, is a nullity—and this is precisely the fact.

In regard to the Iliad, we have, if not positive proof, at least very good reason, for believing it intended as a series of lyrics; but, granting the epic intention, I can say only that the work is based in an imperfect sense of Art. The modern epic is, of the supposititious ancient model, but an inconsiderate and blindfold imitation. But the day of these artistic anomalies is over. If, at any time, any very long poem *were* popular in reality, which I doubt, it is at least clear that no very long poem will ever be popular again.

That the extent of a poetical work is, *ceteris paribus*, the measure of its merit, seems undoubtedly, when we thus state it, a proposition sufficiently absurd—yet we are indebted for it to the Quarterly Reviews. Surely there can be nothing in mere *size*, abstractly considered—there can be nothing in mere *bulk*, so far  
 5 as a volume is concerned, which has so continuously elicited admiration from these saturnine pamphlets! A mountain, to be sure, by the mere sentiment of physical magnitude which it conveys, *does* impress us with a sense of the sublime—but no man is impressed after *this* fashion by the material grandeur of even “The Columbiad.” Even the Quarterlies have not instructed us to be so  
 10 impressed by it. *As yet*, they have not *insisted* on our estimating Lamartine by the cubic foot, or Pollok by the pound—but what else are we to *infer* from their continued prating about “sustained effort”? If, by “sustained effort,” any little gentleman has accomplished an epic, let us frankly commend him for the effort—if this indeed be a thing commendable—but let us forbear praising the  
 15 epic on the effort’s account. It is to be hoped that common sense, in the time to come, will prefer deciding upon a work of art rather by the impression it makes, by the effect it produces, than by the time it took to impress the effect, or by the amount of “sustained effort” which had been found necessary in effecting the impression. The fact is, that perseverance is one thing and genius  
 20 quite another—nor can all the Quarterlies in Christendom confound them. By and by, this proposition, with many which I have just been urging, will be received as self-evident. In the mean time, by being generally condemned as falsities, they will not be essentially damaged as truths.

On the other hand, it is clear that a poem may be improperly brief. Undue  
 25 brevity degenerates into mere epigrammatism. A *very* short poem, while now and then producing a brilliant or vivid, never produces a profound or enduring effect. There must be the steady pressing down of the stamp upon the wax. De Béranger has wrought innumerable things, pungent and spirit-stirring; but in general they have been too imponderous to stamp themselves deeply into  
 30 the public attention, and thus, as so many feathers of fancy, have been blown aloft only to be whistled down the wind.

A remarkable instance of the effect of undue brevity in depressing a poem—in keeping it out of the popular view—is afforded by the following exquisite little Serenade:

35 I arise from dreams of thee  
     In the first sweet sleep of night,  
     When the winds are breathing low,  
     And the stars are shining bright;  
 I arise from dreams of thee,  
 40 And a spirit in my feet  
     Has led me—who knows how?—  
     To thy chamber-window, sweet!

1. *ceteris paribus*—other things being equal. 9. *Columbiad*—An ambitious epic poem (in ten books) published in 1807 by Joel Barlow (1754-1812). 10-11. *Lamartine* . . . *Pollok*—Alphonse de Lamartine (1790-1827), one of the great French poets of the romantic group. Robert Pollok (1798?-1827) published in 1827 a long didactic poem, *The Course of Time*, now generally regarded as unreadable. 34. *Serenade*—In the *Poetical Works* of Shelley edited by Mrs. Shelley (1839) this poem is entitled “Lines to an Indian Air,” and the text differs in punctuation from Poe’s.

The wandering airs, they faint  
 On the dark, the silent stream—  
 The champak odors fail  
 Like sweet thoughts in a dream;  
 The nightingale's complaint, 5  
 It dies upon her heart,  
 As I must die on thine,  
 O, beloved as thou art!  
  
 O, lift me from the grass!  
 I die, I faint, I fail! 10  
 Let thy love in kisses rain  
 On my lips and eyelids pale.  
 My cheek is cold and white, alas!  
 My heart beats loud and fast:  
 Oh! press it close to thine again, 15  
 Where it will break at last!

Very few perhaps are familiar with these lines—yet no less a poet than Shelley is their author. Their warm, yet delicate and ethereal imagination will be appreciated by all—but by none so thoroughly as by him who has himself arisen from sweet dreams of one beloved to bathe in the aromatic air of a southern midsummer night. 20

One of the finest poems by Willis, the very best in my opinion which he has ever written, has no doubt, through this same defect of undue brevity, been kept back from its proper position, not less in the critical than in the popular view. 25

The shadows lay along Broadway,  
 'Twas near the twilight-tide—  
 And slowly there a lady fair  
 Was walking in her pride.  
 Alone walk'd she; but, viewlessly, 30  
 Walk'd spirits at her side.

Peace charm'd the street beneath her feet,  
 And Honour charm'd the air;  
 And all astir looked kind on her,  
 And call'd her good and fair— 35  
 For all God ever gave to her  
 She kept with chary care.

She kept with care her beauties rare  
 From lovers warm and true—  
 For her heart was cold to all but gold, 40  
 And the rich came not to woo—  
 But honour'd well are charms to sell,  
 If priests the selling do.

**26. The shadows**—This poem, under the title "Unseen Spirits," appears in *The Poems, Sacred, Passionate, and Humorous of Nathaniel Parker Willis* (1850), the text of which Poe seems to have followed.



- Now walking there was one more fair—  
 A slight girl, lily-pale;  
 And she had unseen company  
 To make the spirit quail—  
 5 'Twixt Want and Scorn she walk'd forlorn,  
 And nothing could avail.
- No mercy now can clear her brow  
 For this world's peace to pray;  
 For, as love's wild prayer dissolved in air,  
 10 Her woman's heart gave way!—  
 But the sin forgiven by Christ in Heaven  
 By man is cursed away!

In this composition we find it difficult to recognize the Willis who has written so many mere "verses of society." The lines are not only richly ideal, but  
 15 full of energy; while they breathe an earnestness, an evident sincerity of sentiment, for which we look in vain throughout all the other works of this author.

While the epic mania—while the idea that, to merit in poetry, prolixity is indispensable—has for some years past been gradually dying out of the public mind by mere dint of its own absurdity, we find it succeeded by a heresy too  
 20 palpably false to be long tolerated, but one which, in the brief period it has already endured, may be said to have accomplished more in the corruption of our Poetical Literature than all its other enemies combined. I allude to the heresy of *The Didactic*. It has been assumed, tacitly and avowedly, directly and indirectly, that the ultimate object of all Poetry is Truth. Every poem, it is said,  
 25 should inculcate a moral, and by this moral is the poetical merit of the work to be adjudged. We Americans especially have patronized this happy idea, and we Bostonians very especially have developed it in full. We have taken it into our heads that to write a poem simply for the poem's sake, and to acknowledge such to have been our design, would be to confess ourselves radically wanting  
 30 in the true Poetic dignity and force:—but the simple fact is, that would we but permit ourselves to look into our own souls, we should immediately there discover that under the sun there neither exists nor *can* exist any work more thoroughly dignified, more supremely noble than this very poem, this poem *per se*, this poem which is a poem and nothing more, this poem written solely for the  
 35 poem's sake.

With as deep a reverence for the True as ever inspired the bosom of man, I would nevertheless limit, in some measure, its modes of inculcation. I would limit to enforce them. I would not enfeeble them by dissipation. The demands of Truth are severe. She has no sympathy with the myrtles. All *that* which is  
 40 so indispensable in Song is precisely all *that* with which *she* has nothing whatever to do. It is but making her a flaunting paradox to wreath her in gems and flowers. In enforcing a truth, we need severity rather than efflorescence of language. We must be simple, precise, terse. We must be cool, calm, unimpassioned. In a word, we must be in that mood which, as nearly as possible,  
 45 is the exact converse of the poetical. *He* must be blind indeed who does not

39. **myrtles**—The myrtle is associated with Apollo and the Muses as the deities of song.

perceive the radical and chasmal differences between the truthful and the poetical modes of inculcation. He must be theory-mad beyond redemption who, in spite of these differences, shall still persist in attempting to reconcile the obstinate oils and waters of Poetry and Truth.

Dividing the world of mind into its three most immediately obvious distinctions, we have the Pure Intellect, Taste, and the Moral Sense. I place Taste in the middle because it is just this position which it occupies in the mind. It holds intimate relations with either extreme, but from the Moral Sense is separated by so faint a difference that Aristotle has not hesitated to place some of its operations among the virtues themselves. Nevertheless, we find the *offices* of the trio marked with a sufficient distinction. Just as the Intellect concerns itself with Truth, so Taste informs us of the Beautiful, while the Moral Sense is regardful of Duty. Of this latter, while Conscience teaches the obligation, and Reason the expediency, Taste contents herself with displaying the charms, waging war upon Vice solely on the ground of her deformity, her disproportion, her animosity to the fitting, to the appropriate, to the harmonious, in a word, to Beauty.

An immortal instinct deep within the spirit of man is thus plainly a sense of the Beautiful. This it is which administers to his delight in the manifold forms, and sounds, and odors, and sentiments, amid which he exists. And just as the lily is repeated in the lake, or the eyes of Amaryllis in the mirror, so is the mere oral or written repetition of these forms, and sounds, and colors, and odors, and sentiments, a duplicate source of delight. But this mere repetition is not poetry. He who shall simply sing, with however glowing enthusiasm, or with however vivid a truth of description, of the sights, and sounds, and odors, and colors, and sentiments, which greet *him* in common with all mankind—he, I say, has yet failed to prove his divine title. There is still a something in the distance which he has been unable to attain. We have still a thirst unquenchable, to allay which he has not shown us the crystal springs. This thirst belongs to the immortality of Man. It is at once a consequence and an indication of his perennial existence. It is the desire of the moth for the star. It is no mere appreciation of the Beauty before us—but a wild effort to reach the Beauty above. Inspired by an ecstatic prescience of the glories beyond the grave, we struggle by multifarious combinations among the things and thoughts of Time to attain a portion of that Loveliness whose very elements, perhaps, appertain to eternity alone. And thus when by Poetry—or when by Music, the most entrancing of the Poetic moods—we find ourselves melted into tears, we weep then—not as the Abbate Gravina supposes—through excess of pleasure, but through a certain, petulant, impatient sorrow at our inability to grasp *now*, wholly, here on earth, at once and forever, those divine and rapturous joys, of which *through* the poem or *through* the music, we attain to but brief and indeterminate glimpses.

The struggle to apprehend the supernal Loveliness—this struggle, on the part

9. Aristotle—The allusion is to the *Nicomachean Ethics*, for example, Bk. vi. 31. desire . . . star—From Shelley's lyric beginning "One word is too often profaned." 38. Gravina—The reference seems to be to Giovanni Vincenzo Gravina (1664-1718), founder of the Arcadian Academy, and noted critic.

of souls fittingly constituted—has given to the world all *that* which it (the world) has ever been enabled at once to understand and to *feel* as poetic.

The Poetic Sentiment, of course, may develop itself in various modes—in Painting, in Sculpture, in Architecture, in the Dance—very especially in Music  
 5 —and very peculiarly, and with a wide field, in the composition of the Landscape Garden. Our present theme, however, has regard only to its manifestation in words. And here let me speak briefly on the topic of rhythm. Contenting myself with the certainty that Music, in its various modes of metre, rhythm, and rhyme, is of so vast a moment in Poetry as never to be wisely rejected—is so  
 10 vitally important an adjunct that he is simply silly who declines its assistance—I will not now pause to maintain its absolute essentiality. It is in Music, perhaps, that the soul most nearly attains the great end for which, when inspired by the Poetic Sentiment, it struggles—the creation of supernal Beauty. It *may* be, indeed, that here this sublime end is, now and then, attained in *fact*. We  
 15 are often made to feel, with a shivering delight, that from an earthly harp are stricken notes which *cannot* have been unfamiliar to the angels. And thus there can be little doubt that in the union of Poetry with Music in its popular sense, we shall find the widest field for the Poetic development. The old Bards and Minnesingers had advantages which we do not possess—and Thomas Moore,  
 20 singing his own songs, was, in the most legitimate manner, perfecting them as poems.

To recapitulate, then:—I would define, in brief, the Poetry of words as *The Rhythmical Creation of Beauty*. Its sole arbiter is Taste. With the Intellect or with the Conscience, it has only collateral relations. Unless incidentally, it has  
 25 no concern whatever either with Duty or with Truth.

A few words, however, in explanation. *That* pleasure which is at once the most pure, the most elevating, and the most intense, is derived, I maintain, from the contemplation of the Beautiful. In the contemplation of Beauty we alone find it possible to attain that pleasurable elevation, or excitement, *of the*  
 30 *soul*, which we recognize as the Poetic Sentiment, and which is so easily distinguished from Truth, which is the satisfaction of the Reason, or from Passion, which is the excitement of the heart. I make Beauty, therefore,—using the word as inclusive of the sublime,—I make Beauty the province of the poem, simply because it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring  
 35 as directly as possible from their causes:—no one as yet having been weak enough to deny that the peculiar elevation in question is at least *most readily* attainable in the poem. It by no means follows, however, that the incitements of Passion, or the precepts of Duty, or even the lessons of Truth, may not be introduced into a poem, and with advantage; for they may subserve incidentally,  
 40 in various ways, the general purposes of the work:—but the true artist will always contrive to tone them down in proper subjection to that *Beauty* which is the atmosphere and the real essence of the poem.

I cannot better introduce the few poems which I shall present for your consideration, than by the citation of the Proem to Mr. Longfellow's "Waif":

19. **Thomas Moore**—Thomas Moore (1779-1852) was accustomed to sing his own songs to his own music in the drawing-rooms of London. 44. **Waif**—*The Waif* is an anthology of poems edited by Longfellow and published in 1844 (1845).

The day is done, and the darkness  
 Falls from the wings of Night,  
 As a feather is wafted downward  
 From an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village  
 Gleam through the rain and the mist,  
 And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me,  
 That my soul cannot resist;

5

A feeling of sadness and longing,  
 That is not akin to pain,  
 And resembles sorrow only  
 As the mist resembles the rain.

10

Come, read to me some poem,  
 Some simple and heartfelt lay,  
 That shall soothe this restless feeling,  
 And banish the thoughts of day.

15

Not from the grand old masters,  
 Not from the bards sublime,  
 Whose distant footsteps echo  
 Through the corridors of Time.

20

For, like strains of martial music,  
 Their mighty thoughts suggest  
 Life's endless toil and endeavor;  
 And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,  
 Whose songs gushed from his heart,  
 As showers from the clouds of summer,  
 Or tears from the eyelids start;

25

Who through long days of labor,  
 And nights devoid of ease,  
 Still heard in his soul the music  
 Of wonderful melodies.

30

Such songs have power to quiet  
 The restless pulse of care,  
 And come like the benediction  
 That follows after prayer.

35

Then read from the treasured volume  
 The poem of thy choice,  
 And lend to the rhyme of the poet  
 The beauty of thy voice.

40

And the night shall be filled with music,  
 And the cares, that infest the day,  
 Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,  
 And as silently steal away.

- 5 With no great range of imagination, these lines have been justly admired for their delicacy of expression. Some of the images are very effective. Nothing can be better than

The bards sublime  
 Whose distant footsteps echo  
 10 Down the corridors of Time.

The idea of the last quatrain is also very effective. The poem, on the whole, however, is chiefly to be admired for the graceful *insouciance* of its metre, so well in accordance with the character of the sentiments, and especially for the *ease* of the general manner. This "ease" or naturalness, in a literary style, it  
 15 has long been the fashion to regard as ease in appearance alone—as a point of really difficult attainment. But not so:—a natural manner is difficult only to him who should never meddle with it—to the unnatural. It is but the result of writing with the understanding, or with the instinct, that *the tone*, in composition, should always be that which the mass of mankind would adopt—and  
 20 must perpetually vary, of course, with the occasion. The author who, after the fashion of the "North American Review," should be upon *all* occasions merely "quiet," must necessarily upon *many* occasions be simply silly, or stupid; and has no more right to be considered "easy" or "natural" than a Cockney exquisite, or than the sleeping Beauty in the wax-works.

- 25 Among the minor poems of Bryant, none has so much impressed me as the one which he entitles "June." I quote only a portion of it:

There, through the long, long summer hours,  
 The golden light should lie,  
 And thick young herbs and groups of flowers  
 30 Stand in their beauty by.  
 The oriole should build and tell  
 His love-tale, close beside my cell;  
 The idle butterfly  
 Should rest him there, and there be heard  
 35 The housewife-bee and humming bird.

And what if cheerful shouts at noon  
 Come, from the village sent,  
 Or songs of maids, beneath the moon,  
 With fairy laughter blent?  
 40 And what if, in the evening light,  
 Betrothed lovers walk in sight

10. Down—The misquotation is Poe's. Cf. line 20, p. 769. 12. *insouciance*—quality of being care-free. 23. *exquisite*—dandy. 26. "June"—Poe quotes the last four stanzas as printed in Bryant's *Poems* of 1832. There are certain minor differences in punctuation—Bryant has neither question mark nor hyphen in the stanzas quoted.

Of my low monument?  
 I would the lovely scene around  
 Might know no sadder sight nor sound.

I know, I know I should not see  
 The season's glorious show, 5  
 Nor would its brightness shine for me,  
 Nor its wild music flow;  
 But if, around my place of sleep,  
 The friends I love should come to weep,  
 They might not haste to go. 10  
 Soft airs, and song, and light and bloom  
 Should keep them lingering by my tomb.

These to their softened hearts should bear  
 The thought of what has been,  
 And speak of one who cannot share 15  
 The gladness of the scene;  
 Whose part, in all the pomp that fills  
 The circuit of the summer hills,  
 Is—that his grave is green;  
 And deeply would their hearts rejoice 20  
 To hear again his living voice.

The rhythmical flow here is even voluptuous—nothing could be more melodious. The poem has always affected me in a remarkable manner. The intense melancholy which seems to well up, perforce, to the surface of all the poet's cheerful sayings about his grave, we find thrilling us to the soul—while there is the truest poetic elevation in the thrill. The impression left is one of a pleasurable sadness. And if, in the remaining compositions which I shall introduce to you, there be more or less of a similar tone always apparent, let me remind you that (how or why we know not) this certain taint of sadness is inseparably connected with all the higher manifestations of true Beauty. It is, nevertheless, 25 30

A feeling of sadness and longing  
 That is not akin to pain,  
 And resembles sorrow only  
 As the mist resembles the rain. 35

The taint of which I speak is clearly perceptible even in a poem so full of brilliancy and spirit as the "Health" of Edward Coate Pinckney.

I fill this cup to one made up  
 Of loveliness alone,  
 A woman, of her gentle sex 40  
 The seeming paragon;

37. **Pinckney**—The Virginia edition prints "Pinckney," but the poet in question was Edward Coate (or Coote) Pinkney (1802-1828). The poem appears in *Poems* by Edward C. Pinkney (1825), where each stanza is printed as a quatrain of four long lines. There are also certain minor differences in punctuation between Pinkney's version and that quoted by Poe, who seems to have no authority for breaking the poem into eight-line stanzas.

To whom the better elements  
 And kindly stars have given  
 A form so fair, that, like the air,  
 'Tis less of earth than heaven.

5 Her every tone is music's own,  
 Like those of morning birds,  
 And something more than melody  
 Dwells ever in her words;  
 The coinage of her heart are they,  
 10 And from her lips each flows  
 As one may see the burden'd bee  
 Forth issue from the rose.

Affections are as thoughts to her,  
 The measures of her hours;  
 15 Her feelings have the fragrancy,  
 The freshness of young flowers;  
 And lovely passions, changing oft,  
 So fill her, she appears  
 The image of themselves by turns,—  
 20 The idol of past years!

Of her bright face one glance will trace  
 A picture on the brain,  
 And of her voice in echoing hearts  
 A sound must long remain;  
 25 But memory, such as mine of her,  
 So very much endears,  
 When death is nigh, my latest sigh  
 Will not be life's but hers.

I fill this cup to one made up  
 Of loveliness alone,  
 30 A woman, of her gentle sex  
 The seeming paragon—  
 Her health! and would on earth there stood  
 Some more of such a frame,  
 35 That life might be all poetry,  
 And weariness a name.

It was the misfortune of Mr. Pinckney to have been born too far south. Had he been a New Englander, it is probable that he would have been ranked as the first of American lyrists, by that magnanimous cabal which has so long controlled the destinies of American Letters, in conducting the thing called "The  
 40 North American Review." The poem just cited is especially beautiful; but the poetic elevation which it induces, we must refer chiefly to our sympathy in the poet's enthusiasm. We pardon his hyperboles for the evident earnestness with which they are uttered.

45 It was by no means my design, however, to expatiate upon the *merits* of

what I should read you. These will necessarily speak for themselves. Boccacini, in his "Advertisements from Parnassus," tells us that Zoilus once presented Apollo a very caustic criticism upon a very admirable book:—whereupon the god asked him for the beauties of the work. He replied that he only busied himself about the errors. On hearing this, Apollo, handing him a sack of un-  
 5 winnowed wheat, bade him pick out *all the chaff* for his reward.

Now this fable answers very well as a hit at the critics—but I am by no means sure that the god was in the right. I am by no means certain that the true limits of the critical duty are not grossly misunderstood. Excellence, in a poem especially, may be considered in the light of an axiom, which need only  
 10 be properly *put*, to become self-evident. It is *not* excellence if it require to be demonstrated as such:—and thus to point out too particularly the merits of a work of Art, is to admit that they are *not* merits altogether.

Among the "Melodies" of Thomas Moore is one whose distinguished character as a poem proper seems to have been singularly left out of view. I allude  
 15 to his lines beginning—"Come, rest in this bosom." The intense energy of their expression is not surpassed by anything in Byron. There are two of the lines in which a sentiment is conveyed that embodies the *all in all* of the divine passion of love—a sentiment which, perhaps, has found its echo in more, and in more passionate, human hearts than any other single sentiment ever em-  
 20 bodied in words:

Come, rest in this bosom, my own stricken deer,  
 Though the herd have fled from thee, thy home is still here;  
 Here still is the smile, that no cloud can o'ercast,  
 And a heart and a hand all thy own to the last. 25

Oh! what was love made for, if 'tis not the same  
 Through joy and through torment, through glory and shame?  
 I know not, I ask not, if guilt's in that heart,  
 I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art.

Thou hast call'd me thy Angel in moments of bliss, 30  
 And thy Angel I'll be, 'mid the horrors of this,—  
 Through the furnace, unshrinking, thy steps to pursue,  
 And shield thee, and save thee,—or perish there too!

It has been the fashion of late days to deny Moore imagination, while granting him fancy—a distinction originating with Coleridge—than whom no man more  
 35 fully comprehended the great powers of Moore. The fact is, that the fancy of this poet so far predominates over all his other faculties, and over the fancy of all other men, as to have induced, very naturally, the idea that he is fanciful *only*. But never was there a greater mistake. Never was a grosser wrong done the fame of a true poet. In the compass of the English language I can call to  
 40 mind no poem more profoundly—more weirdly *imaginative*, in the best sense,

1. Boccacini—Trajan Boccacini (1556-1613) published the *Advertisements from Parnassus* in 1612. 14. "Melodies"—The *Irish Melodies* of Moore appeared at intervals from 1807 to 1835. 35. distinction—Poe refers to the famous distinction made by Coleridge in his *Biographia Literaria* (1817, 1847).



than the lines commencing—"I would I were by that dim lake"—which are the composition of Thomas Moore. I regret that I am unable to remember them.

- 5 One of the noblest—and, speaking of fancy, one of the most singularly fanciful of modern poets, was Thomas Hood. His "Fair Ines" had always for me an inexpressible charm:

O saw ye not fair Ines?  
 She's gone into the West,  
 To dazzle when the sun is down,  
 10 And rob the world of rest:  
 She took our daylight with her,  
 The smiles that we love best,  
 With morning blushes on her cheek,  
 And pearls upon her breast.

O turn again, fair Ines,  
 Before the fall of night,  
 For fear the Moon should shine alone,  
 And stars unrivall'd bright;  
 And blessed will the lover be  
 20 That walks beneath their light,  
 And breathes the love against thy cheek  
 I dare not even write!

Would I had been, fair Ines,  
 That gallant cavalier,  
 25 Who rode so gaily by thy side,  
 And whisper'd thee so near!  
 Were there no bonny dames at home,  
 Or no true lovers here,  
 That he should cross the seas to win  
 30 The dearest of the dear?

I saw thee, lovely Ines,  
 Descend along the shore,  
 With bands of noble gentlemen,  
 And banners wav'd before;  
 35 And gentle youth and maidens gay,  
 And snowy plumes they wore;  
 It would have been a beauteous dream,  
 If it had been no more!

Alas, alas, fair Ines,  
 40 She went away with song,

1. "I would . . ."—Poe's reference is to one of the later *Irish Melodies* beginning "I wish I was by that dim Lake," which may be found in the Oxford edition of Moore's *Poetical Works*, p. 226. 5. Hood—Thomas Hood (1799-1845), humorist and poet, of whom, after condemning his puns, Poe wrote in his *Marginalia* that he was "*distinctive* [in the] borderland between Fancy and Fantasy . . . he is never truly or purely imaginative for more than a paragraph at a time." 5. "Fair Ines"—The text of "Fair Ines" quoted by Poe follows closely that in *Poems* by Thomas Hood (London, 1846), with a few minor variations in punctuation. Curiously enough, neither "Fair Ines" nor "The Bridge of Sighs" was included in the *Poems* of Hood published by Putnam in New York in 1850.

With Music waiting on her steps,  
 And shoutings of the throng;  
 But some were sad, and felt no mirth,  
 But only Music's wrong,  
 In sounds that sang Farewell, Farewell,  
 To her you've loved so long. 5

Farewell, farewell, fair Ines,  
 That vessel never bore  
 So fair a lady on its deck,  
 Nor danced so light before,— 10  
 Alas for pleasure on the sea,  
 And sorrow on the shore!  
 The smile that blest one lover's heart  
 Has broken many more!

"The Haunted House," by the same author, is one of the truest poems ever 15  
 written, one of the *truest*, one of the most unexceptionable, one of the most  
 thoroughly artistic, both in its theme and in its execution. It is, moreover,  
 powerfully ideal—imaginative. I regret that its length renders it unsuitable  
 for the purposes of this Lecture. In place of it, permit me to offer the uni-  
 versally appreciated "Bridge of Sighs." 20

One more Unfortunate,  
 Weary of breath,  
 Rashly importunate,  
 Gone to her death!

Take her up tenderly, 25  
 Lift her with care;—  
 Fashion'd so slenderly,  
 Young, and so fair!

Look at her garments  
 Clinging like cerements; 30  
 Whilst the wave constantly  
 Drips from her clothing;  
 Take her up instantly,  
 Loving, not loathing—

Touch her not scornfully; 35  
 Think of her mournfully,  
 Gently and humanly;  
 Not of the stains of her,  
 All that remains of her  
 Now is pure womanly. 40

15. "The Haunted House"—a "Romance" in three parts, for which consult Hood's *Poems*.

19. Lecture—Poe delivered this essay, or the substance of it, as a lecture as early as 1848.

20. "Bridge of Sighs"—Poe omits Hood's motto for the poem: "Drown'd! Drown'd!"—  
 HAMLET. In general he follows the text of Hood's *Poems* of 1846, though he does not keep all of  
 Hood's stanzaic divisions, and there are minor variations in punctuation.

Make no deep scrutiny  
Into her mutiny  
Rash and undutiful;  
Past all dishonor,  
5 Death has left on her  
Only the beautiful.

Still, for all slips of hers,  
One of Eve's family—  
10 Wipe those poor lips of hers  
Oozing so clammy.  
Loop up her tresses  
Escaped from the comb,  
Her fair auburn tresses;  
Whilst wonderment guesses  
15 Where was her home?

Who was her father?  
Who was her mother?  
Had she a sister?  
Had she a brother?  
20 Or was there a dearer one  
Still, and a nearer one  
Yet, than all other?

Alas! for the rarity  
Of Christian charity  
25 Under the sun!  
Oh! it was pitiful!  
Near a whole city full,  
Home she had none.

Sisterly, brotherly,  
30 Fatherly, motherly  
Feelings had changed:  
Love, by harsh evidence,  
Thrown from its eminence;  
Even God's providence  
35 Seeming estranged.

Where the lamps quiver  
So far in the river,  
With many a light  
40 From window and casement,  
From garret to basement,  
She stood, with amazement,  
Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March  
Made her tremble and shiver;  
45 But not the dark arch,  
Or the black flowing river:

Mad from life's history,  
Glad to death's mystery,  
Swift to be hurl'd—  
Anywhere, anywhere  
Out of the world!

5

In she plunged boldly,  
No matter how coldly  
The rough river ran,—  
Over the brink of it,  
Picture it,—think of it,  
Dissolute Man!  
Lave in it, drink of it  
Then, if you can!

10

Take her up tenderly,  
Lift her with care,  
Fashion'd so slenderly,  
Young, and so fair!

15

Ere her limbs frigidly  
Stiffen too rigidly,  
Decently,—kindly,—  
Smooth, and compose them;  
And her eyes, close them,  
Staring so blindly!

20

Dreadfully staring  
Through muddy impurity,  
As when with the daring  
Last look of despairing  
Fixed on futurity.

25

Perishing gloomily,  
Spurred by contumely,  
Cold inhumanity,  
Burning insanity,  
Into her rest,—  
Cross her hands humbly,  
As if praying dumbly,  
Over her breast!  
Owning her weakness,  
Her evil behaviour,  
And leaving, with meekness,  
Her sins to her Savior!

30

35

40

The vigor of this poem is no less remarkable than its pathos. The versification, although carrying the fanciful to the very verge of the fantastic, is nevertheless admirably adapted to the wild insanity which is the thesis of the poem.

Among the minor poems of Lord Byron is one which has never received from the critics the praise which it undoubtedly deserves:

- 5           Though the day of my destiny's over,  
            And the star of my fate hath declined,  
Thy soft heart refused to discover  
            The faults which so many could find;  
            Though thy soul with my grief was acquainted,  
            It shrunk not to share it with me,  
10           And the love which my spirit hath painted  
            It never hath found but in *thee*.
- Then when nature around me is smiling,  
            The last smile which answers to mine,  
I do not believe it beguiling,  
            Because it reminds me of thine;  
15           And when winds are at war with the ocean,  
            As the breasts I believed in with me,  
If their billows excite an emotion,  
            It is that they bear me from *thee*.
- 20           Though the rock of my last hope is shivered,  
            And its fragments are sunk in the wave,  
Though I feel that my soul is delivered  
            To pain—it shall not be its slave.  
            There is many a pang to pursue me:  
            They may crush, but they shall not contemn—  
25           They may torture, but shall not subdue me—  
            'Tis of *thee* that I think—not of them.
- 30           Though human, thou didst not deceive me,  
            Though woman, thou didst not forsake,  
Though loved, thou forbores to grieve me,  
            Though slandered, thou never couldst shake,—  
Though trusted, thou didst not disclaim me,  
            Though parted, it was not to fly,  
35           Though watchful, 'twas not to defame me,  
            Nor mute, that the world might belie.
- 40           Yet I blame not the world, nor despise it,  
            Nor the war of the many with one—  
If my soul was not fitted to prize it,  
            'Twas folly not sooner to shun:  
            And if dearly that error hath cost me,  
            And more than I once could foresee,  
40           I have found that whatever it lost me,  
            It could not deprive me of *thee*.

From the wreck of the past, which hath perished,  
Thus much I at least may recall,

1. one—This poem of Byron's is the famous "Stanzas to Augusta" published in the *Prisoner of Chillon* volume (1816). Poe's text differs in capitalization and punctuation from the original.

It hath taught me that which I most cherished,  
 Deserved to be dearest of all:  
 In the desert a fountain is springing,  
 In the wide waste there still is a tree,  
 And a bird in the solitude singing,  
 Which speaks to my spirit of *thee*.

5

Although the rhythm here is one of the most difficult, the versification could scarcely be improved. No nobler *theme* ever engaged the pen of poet. It is the soul-elevating idea that no man can consider himself entitled to complain of Fate while, in his adversity, he still retains the unwavering love of woman. 10

From Alfred Tennyson—although in perfect sincerity I regard him as the noblest poet that ever lived—I have left myself time to cite only a very brief specimen. I call him, and *think* him the noblest of poets—*not* because the impressions he produces are at *all* times the most profound—*not* because the poetical excitement which he induces is at *all* times the most intense—but because it *is* at all times the most ethereal—in other words, the most elevating and most pure. No poet is so little of the earth, earthy. What I am about to read is from his last long poem, “The Princess”: 15

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,  
 Tears from the depth of some divine despair  
 Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,  
 In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,  
 And thinking of the days that are no more.

20

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,  
 That brings our friends up from the underworld,  
 Sad as the last which reddens over one  
 That sinks with all we love below the verge;  
 So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

25

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns  
 The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds  
 To dying ears, when unto dying eyes  
 The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;  
 So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

30

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,  
 And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd  
 On lips that are for others; deep as love,  
 Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;  
 O Death in Life, the days that are no more.

35

Thus, although in a very cursory and imperfect manner, I have endeavoured to convey to you my conception of the Poetic Principle. It has been my purpose to suggest that, while this Principle itself is strictly and simply the Human 40

11. Tennyson—“The injustice done in America to the magnificent genius of Tennyson is one of the worst sins for which the country has to answer.” (Poe in the *Broadway Journal*, July 19, 1845) Poe wrote much on Tennyson, for which see the index to the Virginia edition, under Tennyson. 18. “The Princess”—*The Princess* first appeared in 1847.

Aspiration for Supernal Beauty, the manifestation of the Principle is always found in *an elevating excitement of the Soul*, quite independent of that passion which is the intoxication of the Heart, or of that truth which is the satisfaction of the Reason. For in regard to Passion, alas! its tendency is to degrade  
 5 rather than to elevate the Soul. Love, on the contrary—Love—the true, the divine Eros—the Uranian as distinguished from the Dionæan Venus—is unquestionably the purest and truest of all poetical themes. And in regard to Truth—if, to be sure, through the attainment of a truth we are led to perceive a harmony where none was apparent before, we experience at once the true  
 10 poetical effect—but this effect is referable to the harmony alone, and not in the least degree to the truth which merely served to render the harmony manifest.

We shall reach, however, more immediately a distinct conception of what the true Poetry is, by mere reference to a few of the simple elements which  
 15 induce in the Poet himself the true poetical effect. He recognizes the ambrosia which nourishes his soul, in the bright orbs that shine in Heaven—in the volutes of the flower—in the clustering of low shrubberies—in the waving of the grain-fields—in the slanting of tall Eastern trees—in the blue distance of mountains—in the grouping of clouds—in the twinkling of half-hidden brooks  
 20 —in the gleaming of silver rivers—in the repose of sequestered lakes—in the star-mirroring depths of lonely wells. He perceives it in the songs of birds—in the harp of Aeolus—in the sighing of the night-wind—in the repining voice of the forest—in the surf that complains to the shore—in the fresh breath of the woods—in the scent of the violet—in the voluptuous perfume of the hyacinth—in the suggestive odor that comes to him at eventide from far-distant,  
 25 undiscovered islands, over dim oceans, illimitable and unexplored. He owns it in all noble thoughts—in all unworldly motives—in all holy impulses—in all chivalrous, generous, and self-sacrificing deeds. He feels it in the beauty of woman—in the grace of her step—in the lustre of her eye—in the melody of  
 30 her voice—in her soft laughter—in her sigh—in the harmony of the rustling of her robes. He deeply feels it in her winning endearments—in her burning enthusiasms—in her gentle charities—in her meek and devotional endurances—but above all—ah, far above all—he kneels to it, he worships it in the faith, in the purity, in the strength, in the altogether divine majesty—of her *love*.

35 Let me conclude by the recitation of yet another brief poem—one very different in character from any that I have before quoted. It is by Motherwell, and is called "The Song of the Cavalier." With our modern and altogether rational ideas of the absurdity and impiety of warfare, we are not precisely in that frame of mind best adapted to sympathize with the sentiments, and thus  
 40 to appreciate the real excellence of the poem. To do this fully we must identify ourselves in fancy with the soul of the old cavalier.

6. Eros—Cupid as a type of celestial love. 6. Uranian . . . Dionæan—Uranian means celestial, and Poe apparently desires to oppose Dionæan to it in the sense of earthly. As Dione was the mother of Venus, his mythology is not accurate. The student will note that this passage is the theme of "Ulalume." 17. volutes—convolutions. 18. Eastern—The reference, if any, is obscure. 22. harp of Aeolus—The Aeolian harp, wind-stirred, came to be a standard type of spontaneous music and poetry with the romantic writers. 36. Motherwell—William Motherwell (1797-1829), the Scotch poet. In *The Poetical Works of William Motherwell* published in Boston in 1847 this poem appears as "The Cavalier's Song." Poe quotes the second stanza only.

Then mount! then mounte, brave gallants, all,  
 And don your helmes amaine:  
 Deathe's couriers, Fame and Honour, call  
 Us to the field againe.  
 No shrewish teares shall fill our eye  
 When the sword-hilt's in our hand,—  
 Heart-whole we'll part, and no whit sighe  
 For the fayrest of the land;  
 Let piping swaine, and craven wight,  
 Thus weepe and puling crye,  
 Our business is like men to fight,  
 And hero-like to die!

16

## MELLONTA TAUTA

"Mellonta Tauta" ("Those Things That Are to Be") first appeared in *Godey's Lady's Book* for February, 1849, and was reprinted with minor variations of the text by Griswold. The magazine text is here followed. Poe later reprinted a large portion of "Mellonta Tauta" in his *Eureka*. The selection is important because it illustrates so large a number of Poe's interests and crotchets—the scientific hoax, the pretense at metaphysical omniscience, the interest in astronomy, social criticism, and a certain cruel rapidity of thought and style characteristic of his later work.

*To the Editor of the Lady's Book:*

I have the honor of sending you, for your magazine, an article which I hope you will be able to comprehend rather more distinctly than I do myself. It is a translation, by my friend Martin Van Buren Mavis (sometimes called the "Poughkeepsie Seer,") of an odd-looking MS. which I found, about a year ago, tightly corked up in a jug floating in the *Mare Tenebrarum*—a sea well described by the Nubian geographer, but seldom visited, now-a-days, except by the transcendentalists and divers for crotchets.

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Very Truly,

EDGAR A. POE

## ON BOARD BALLOON "SKYLARK,"

April 1, 2848;

Now, my dear friend—now, for your sins, you are to suffer the infliction of a long gossiping letter. I tell you distinctly that I am going to punish you for

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16. **Martin Van Buren**—In 1848 Martin Van Buren, to the horror of Southern Democrats, was nominated for the Presidency on the Free Soil ticket. His home (Lindenwald) in Columbia County, New York, was not far from Poughkeepsie. Why "Mavis," does not appear. 18-19. **Mare . . . Nubian geographer**—In *Eureka* Poe identifies the "Nubian geographer" with Ptolemy Hephestion—an error for Claudius Ptolemaeus, whose *Guide to Geography* is in question. Hostile to Boston, Poe ironically thinks that the transcendentalists sail on a "Sea of Shadows" (*Mare Tenebrarum*); but the great index to Ptolemy's *Geography* prepared by Joseph Moletius (Venice, 1562) fails to reveal any *Mare Tenebrarum* in the book. 23. **Balloon**—The thirties and forties of the last century saw much interest in the possibilities of balloons for scientific and transportation purposes. Poe's imagination was enkindled; among other evidences of his interest are "The Unparalleled Adventure of One Hans Pfaall" (*Southern Literary Messenger*, June, 1835), and "The Balloon Hoax" (*New York Sun*, Apr. 13, 1844), which may be read in the collected works. 25. **Now**—It will make for the comfort of the student to realize that this letter is by "Pundita," presumably the wife of the "Pundit" frequently referred to.



all your impertinences by being as tedious, as discursive, as incoherent, and as unsatisfactory as possible. Besides, here I am, cooped in a dirty balloon, with some one or two hundred of the *canaille*, all bound on a *pleasure* excursion, (what a funny idea some people have of pleasure!) and I have no prospect of  
 3 touching *terra firma* for a month at least. Nobody to talk to. Nothing to do. When one has nothing to do, then is the time to correspond with one's friends. You perceive, then, why it is that I write you this letter—it is on account of my *ennui* and your sins.

Get ready your spectacles and make up your mind to be annoyed. I mean  
 10 to write at you every day during this odious voyage.

Heigho! when will any *Invention* visit the human pericranium? Are we forever to be doomed to the thousand inconveniences of the balloon? Will *nobody* contrive a more expeditious mode of progress? This jog-trot movement, to my thinking, is little less than positive torture. Upon my word we have not made  
 15 more than a hundred miles the hour since leaving home! The very birds beat us—at least some of them. I assure you that I do not exaggerate at all. Our motion, no doubt, seems slower than it actually is—this on account of our having no objects about us by which to estimate our velocity, and on account of our going *with* the wind. To be sure, whenever we meet a balloon we have  
 20 a chance of perceiving our rate, and then, I admit, things do not appear so very bad. Accustomed as I am to this mode of traveling, I cannot get over a kind of giddiness whenever a balloon passes us in a current directly overhead. It always seems to me like an immense bird of prey about to pounce upon us and carry us off in its claws. One went over us this morning about sunrise,  
 25 and so nearly overhead that its drag rope actually brushed the net-work suspending our car, and caused us very serious apprehension. Our captain said that if the material of the bag had been the trumpery varnished “silk” of five hundred or a thousand years ago, we should inevitably have been damaged. This silk, as he explained it to me, was a fabric composed of the entrails of a  
 30 species of earth-worm. The worm was carefully fed on mulberries—a kind of fruit resembling a water-melon—and, when sufficiently fat, was crushed in a mill. The paste thus arising was called *papyrus* in its primary state, and went through a variety of processes until it finally became “silk.” Singular to relate, it was once much admired as an article of *female dress*! Balloons were also  
 35 very generally constructed from it. A better kind of material, it appears, was subsequently found in the down surrounding the seed-vessels of a plant vulgarly called *euphorbium*, and at that time botanically termed milkweed. This latter kind of silk was designated as silk-buckingham, on account of its su-

3. *canaille*—vulgar crowd. 5. *terra firma*—solid ground. 5. *month*—If the balloon goes at the rate of 100 miles an hour (and there is no evidence in the story that it ever stops), Pundita's pleasure excursion is to consist of circumnavigating the earth three times in a month! Poe's mathematics does not agree with the geography of his story. 25. *drag rope*—The use of the drag rope as a means of checking or increasing the rate at which a balloon might travel was in 1849 a relatively recent discovery of Charles Green's (1785-1870), famous for the “Nassau balloon.” 30-31. *mulberries* . . . *water-melon*—Poe deliberately introduces confusions of this sort into his narrative for verisimilitude. The entire description of silk-making is purposely inaccurate. 38. *silk-buckingham*—a vague hit at James Silk Buckingham (1786-1855), a writer of voluminous—and tedious—travel books; an *Outline Sketch of the Voyages, Travels, Writings and Public Labours of James Silk Buckingham* appeared in 1848.

perior durability, and was usually prepared for use by being varnished with a solution of gum caoutchouc—a substance which in some respects must have resembled the *gutta percha* now in common use. This caoutchouc was occasionally called India rubber or rubber of whist, and was no doubt one of the numerous *fungi*. Never tell me again that I am not at heart an antiquarian. 5

Talking of drag-ropes our own, it seems, has this moment knocked a man overboard from one of the small magnetic propellers that swarm in ocean below us—a boat of about six thousand tons, and, from all accounts, shamefully crowded. These diminutive barques should be prohibited from carrying more than a definite number of passengers. The man, of course, was not permitted to get on board again, and was soon out of sight, he and his life-preserver. I rejoice, my dear friend, that we live in an age so enlightened that no such thing as an individual is supposed to exist. It is the mass for which the true Humanity cares. By the by, talking of Humanity, do you know that our immortal Wiggins is not so original in his views of the Social Condition and so forth, as his contemporaries are inclined to suppose? Pundit assures me that the same ideas were put, nearly in the same way, about a thousand years ago, by an Irish philosopher called Furrier, on account of his keeping a retail shop for cat-peltries and other furs. Pundit *knows*, you know; there can be no mistake about it. How very wonderfully do we see verified, every day, the profound observation of the Hindoo Aries Tottle (as quoted by Pundit)—“Thus must we say that, not once or twice, or a few times, but with almost infinite repetitions, the same opinions come round in a circle among men.” 10 15 20

*April 2.*—Spoke to-day the magnetic cutter in charge of the middle section of floating telegraph wires. I learn that when this species of telegraph was first put into operation by Horse, it was considered quite impossible to convey the wires over sea; but now we are at a loss to comprehend where the difficulty lay! So wags the world. *Tempora mutantur*—excuse me for quoting the Etruscan. What *would* we do without the Atalantic telegraph? (Pundit says Atlantic was the ancient adjective.) We lay to a few minutes to ask the cutter some questions, and learned, among other glorious news, that civil war 25 30

**2-5. gum caoutchouc . . . fungi**—The flourish of botanic names here is intended purely for humor and to “show up” antiquarianism. “Gum caoutchouc,” from which rubber is made, is not a fungus. The punning play on “India rubber—rubber of whist” is typical of much of the humor of the forties. **7. magnetic propellers**—The phrase need not be taken very seriously. It is, however, interesting to note that the first large ship to be built with a propeller, the *Great Britain*, was constructed only in 1844, her tonnage being 3,448. Poe’s boat of about six thousand tons and small magnetic propellers are therefore quasi-humorous. **14. Humanity**—Under the influence of Fourier, Saint-Simon, the transcendentalists, and other reformatory groups, the word *Humanity* was much bandied about in the forties—to Poe’s sardonic disgust. **18. Furrier**—François Charles Marie Fourier (1772-1837) advocated a reorganization of society into units (phalanges), each to be economically self-sufficient (phalanstery) in line with the principles of “social harmony.” (Note Poe’s hit at cats.) **21. Aries Tottle**—Aristotle. **25. floating telegraph wires**—The first electric telegraph was opened between Baltimore and Washington in 1844. Despite experiments by Morse in 1842 with submarine cables, the principle of insulating telegraph wires was not well known, a submarine cable (between England and France) not being laid until after “Mellonta Tauta” was published—that is, not until 1850. **26. Horse**—S. F. B. Morse (1791-1872), inventor of the electric telegraph. **28-29. Tempora mutantur . . . Etruscan**—“Times change.” Part of a line reading “*Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis*”—a variant of “*Omnia mutantur nos et mutamur illis*,” from Matthias Borbonius, *Deliciae Poetarum Germanorum*, Vol. I, p. 685. Poe follows a common error in attributing the line to Virgil (the Etruscan).

is raging in Africa, while the plague is doing its good work beautifully both in Yurope and Ayesher. Is it not truly remarked that, before the magnificent light shed upon philosophy by Humanity, the world was accustomed to regard War and Pestilence as calamities? Do you know that prayers were actually  
 5 offered up in the ancient temples to the end that these *evils*(!) might not be visited upon mankind? Is it not really difficult to comprehend upon what principle of interest our forefathers acted? Were they so blind as not to perceive that the destruction of a myriad of individuals is only so much positive advantage to the mass!

- 10 *April 3.*—It is really a very fine amusement to ascend the rope-ladder leading to the summit of the balloon-bag and thence survey the surrounding world. From the car below, you know, the prospect is not so comprehensive—you can see little vertically. But seated here (where I write this) in the luxuriously-cushioned open piazza of the summit, one can see everything that is going on  
 15 in all directions. Just now, there is quite a crowd of balloons in sight, and they present a very animated appearance, while the air is resonant with the hum of so many millions of human voices. I have heard it asserted that when Yellow or (as Pundit *will* have it) Violet, who is supposed to have been the first aeronaut, maintained the practicability of traversing the atmosphere in all direc-  
 20 tions, by merely ascending or descending until a favorable current was attained, he was scarcely hearkened to at all by his contemporaries, who looked upon him as merely an ingenious sort of madman, because the philosophers (?) of the day declared the thing impossible. Really now it does seem to me  
 25 *quite* unaccountable how anything so obviously feasible could have escaped the sagacity of the ancient *savans*. But in all ages the great obstacles to advancement in Art have been opposed by the so-called men of science. To be sure, *our* men of science are not quite so bigoted as those of old:—oh, I have something *so* queer to tell you on this topic. Do you know that it is not more than a thousand years ago since the metaphysicians consented to relieve the people  
 30 of the singular fancy that there existed but *two possible roads for the attainment of Truth*! Believe it if you can! It appears that long, long ago, in the night of Time, there lived a Turkish philosopher (or Hindoo possibly) called Aries Tottle. This person introduced, or at all events propagated what was termed the deductive or *à priori* mode of investigation. He started with what  
 35 he maintained to be *axioms* or “self-evident truths,” and thence proceeded “logically” to results. His greatest disciples were one Neuclyd and one Cant. Well, Aries Tottle flourished supreme until the advent of one Hog, surnamed the “Ettrick Shepherd,” who preached an entirely different system, which he

2. **Yurope . . . Ayesher**—Europe, Asia. 14. **open piazza**—Motion at the rate of 100 miles an hour would, of course, make an “open piazza” impossible. 18. **Violet**—Poe’s reference is confused. The first human being to ascend in a balloon was Jean François Pilâtre de Rozier (1756-1785), who in 1783 had as companion Girond de Vilette—apparently Poe’s “Violet.” 30. **two possible roads**—The value of Poe’s attempt at a theory of knowledge midway between his (oversimplified) versions of Aristotle and Bacon is much in dispute, the weight of opinion inclining to dismiss Poe’s as charlatanism. The development of relativity, however, has caused a rise in Poe’s stock as a theorizer. 36. **Neuclyd**—Euclid, who, however, died when Aristotle was ten years old. 36. **Cant**—Immanuel Kant, greatest of German metaphysicians (1724-1804). 37. **Hog**—Pundita confuses Francis Bacon (1561-1626) with James Hogg the poet (1772-1835), known as the “Ettrick Shepherd.”

called the *à posteriori* or *inductive*. His plan referred altogether to Sensation. He proceeded by observing, analyzing and classifying facts—*instantiae naturae*, as they were affectedly called—into general laws. Aries Tottle's mode, in a word, was based on *noumena*; Hog's on *phenomena*. Well, so great was the admiration excited by this latter system that, at its first introduction, Aries Tottle fell into disrepute; but finally he recovered ground, and was permitted to divide the realm of Truth with his more modern rival. The *savans* now maintained that the Aristotelian and *Baconian* roads were the sole possible avenues to knowledge. "Baconian," you must know, was an adjective invented as equivalent to Hog-ian and more euphonious and dignified.

Now, my dear friend, I do assure you, most positively, that I represent this matter fairly, on the soundest authority; and you can easily understand how a notion so absurd on its very face must have operated to retard the progress of all true knowledge—which makes its advances almost invariably by intuitive bounds. The ancient idea confined investigation to *crawling*; and for hundreds of years so great was the infatuation about Hog especially, that a virtual end was put to all thinking properly so called. No man dared utter a truth to which he felt himself indebted to his *Soul* alone. It mattered not whether the truth was even *demonstrably* a truth, for the bullet-headed *savans* of the time regarded only *the road* by which he had attained it. They would not even *look* at the end. "Let us see the means," they cried, "the means!" If, upon investigation of the means, it was found to come neither under the category of Aries (that is to say Ram) nor under the category Hog, why then the savans went no farther, but pronounced the "theorist" a fool, and would have nothing to do with him or his truth.

Now, it cannot be maintained, even, that by the crawling system the greatest amount of truth would be attained in any long series of ages, for the repression of *imagination* was an evil not to be compensated for by any superior *certainty* in the ancient modes of investigation. The error of these Jurmains, these Vrinch, these Inglitch and these Amriccans, (the latter, by the way, were our own immediate progenitors,) was an error quite analogous with that of the wiseacre who fancies that he must necessarily see an object the better the more closely he holds it to his eyes. These people blinded themselves by details. When they proceeded Hoggishly, their "facts" were by no means always facts—a matter of little consequence had it not been for assuming that they *were* facts and must be facts because they appeared to be such. When they proceeded on the path of the Ram, their course was scarcely as straight as a ram's horn, for they *never had* an axiom which was an axiom at all. They must have been very blind not to see this, even in their own day; for even in their own day many of the long "established" axioms had been rejected. For

1. *Sensation*—that is, data of the senses. Poe, however, is unfair to Bacon. 2. *instantiae naturae*—natural instances; but Bacon's phrase in the *Novum Organon* is "*instantiae prerogativae*"—prerogative [that is, governing] instances. 4. *noumena* . . . *phenomena*—On the difference between these terms the student should consult an unabridged dictionary. 22-23. *Aries* . . . *Ram*—The play on words refers to the signs of the zodiac. 29. *Jurmains*—The Germans in the first half of the nineteenth century were leading theorists in speculative philosophy. The French ("Vrinch") metaphysicians like Cousin, the English, and the Americans were more or less indebted to German transcendentalism.

- example—"Ex nihilo nihil fit," "a body cannot act where it is not;" "there cannot exist antipodes;" "darkness cannot come out of light"—all these, and a dozen other similar propositions, formerly admitted without hesitation as axioms, were, even at the period of which I speak, seen to be untenable. How  
 5 absurd in these people, then, to persist in putting faith in "axioms" as immutable bases of Truth! But even out of the mouths of their soundest reasoners it is easy to demonstrate the futility, the impalpability of their axioms in general. Who *was* the soundest of their logicians? Let me see! I will go and ask Pundit and be back in a minute. . . . Ah, here we have it! Here is a book  
 10 written nearly a thousand years ago and lately translated from the Inglitch—which, by the way, appears to have been the rudiments of the American. Pundit says it is decidedly the cleverest ancient work on its topic, Logic. The author (who was much thought of in his day) was one Miller, or Mill; and we find it recorded of him, as a point of some importance, that he had a mill-  
 15 horse called Bentham. But let us glance at the treatise!

- Ah!—"Ability or inability to conceive," says Mr. Mill, very properly, "is in no case to be received as a criterion of axiomatic truth." What *modern* in his senses would ever think of disputing this truism? The only wonder with us must be, how it happened that Mr. Mill conceived it necessary even to hint  
 20 at any thing so obvious. So far good—but let us turn over another page. What have we here?—"Contradictories cannot both be true—that is, cannot co-exist in nature." Here Mr. Mill means, for example, that a tree must be either a tree or not a tree—that it cannot be at the same time a tree and not a tree. Very well; but I ask him *why*. His reply is this—and never pretends to be any thing  
 25 else than this—"Because it is impossible to conceive that contradictories can both be true." But this is no answer at all, by his own showing; for has he not just admitted as a truism that "ability or inability to conceive is *in no case* to be received as a criterion of axiomatic truth."

- Now I do not complain of these ancients so much because their logic is, by  
 30 their own showing, utterly baseless, worthless and fantastic altogether, as because of their pompous and imbecile proscription of all *other* roads of truth, of all *other* means for its attainment than the two preposterous paths—the one of creeping and the one of crawling—to which they have dared to confine the Soul that loves nothing so well as to *soar*.

- By the by, my dear friend, do you not think it would have puzzled these  
 35 ancient dogmaticians to have determined by *which* of their two roads it was that the most important and most sublime of *all* their truths was, in effect, attained? I mean the truth of Gravitation. Newton owed it to Kepler. Kepler admitted that his three laws were *guessed at*—these three laws of all laws which  
 40 led the great Inglitch mathematician to his principle, the basis of all physical principle—to go behind which we must enter the Kingdom of Metaphysics.

1. "Ex nihilo . . . fit"—"Nothing can be created from nothing." 13. Miller, or Mill—In 1843 John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) published *A System of Logic, Rationative and Inductive*, 2 vols., generally regarded as the best theoretic presentation of the basis of nineteenth-century inductive science. 15. Bentham—Mill represented the second phase of utilitarian thought, largely shaped in modern times by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), and representative of Baconian methodology. 16. Ability—For Mill's discussion of axioms see Bk. II of the *Logic*, especially Chaps. v-vii. Poe is not fair to Mill. 38. Kepler—See note 22, p. 480.

Kepler guessed—that is to say, *imagined*. He was essentially a “theorist”—that word now of so much sanctity, formerly an epithet of contempt. Would it not have puzzled these old moles, too, to have explained by which of the two “roads” a cryptographist unriddles a cryptograph of more than usual secrecy, or by which of the two roads Champollion directed mankind to those enduring and almost innumerable truths which resulted from his deciphering the Hieroglyphics? 5

One word more on this topic and I will be done boring you. Is it not *passing* strange that, with their eternal prating about *roads* to Truth, these bigoted people missed what we now so clearly perceive to be the great highway—that of Consistency? Does it not seem singular how they should have failed to deduce from the works of God the vital fact that a perfect consistency *must be* an absolute truth! How plain has been our progress since the late announcement of this proposition! Investigation has been taken out of the hands of the ground-moles and given, as a task, to the true and only true thinkers, the men of ardent imagination. These latter *theorize*. Can you not fancy the shout of scorn with which my words would be received by our progenitors were it possible for them to be now looking over my shoulder? These men, I say, *theorize*; and their theories are simply corrected, reduced, systematized—cleared, little by little, of their dross of inconsistency—until, finally, a perfect consistency stands apparent which even the most stolid admit, because it *is* a consistency, to be an absolute and an unquestionable *truth*. 10 15 20

*April 4.*—The new gas is doing wonders, in conjunction with the new improvement in gutta percha. How very safe, commodious, manageable, and in every respect convenient are our modern balloons! Here is an immense one approaching us at the rate of at least a hundred and fifty miles an hour. It seems to be crowded with people—perhaps there are three or four hundred passengers—and yet it soars to an elevation of nearly a mile, looking down upon poor us with sovereign contempt. Still a hundred or even two hundred miles an hour is slow traveling, after all. *Do* you remember our flight on the railroad across the Kanadaw continent?—fully three hundred miles the hour—that was traveling. Nothing to be seen, though—nothing to be done but flirt, feast and dance in the magnificent saloons. Do you remember what an odd sensation was experienced when, by chance, we caught a glimpse of external objects while the cars were in full flight? Everything seemed unique—in one mass. For my part, I cannot say but that I preferred the traveling by the slow train of a hundred miles the hour. Here we were permitted to have glass windows—even to have them open—and something like a distinct view of the country was attainable. . . . Pundit says that *the route* for the great Kanadaw railroad must have been in some measure marked out about nine hundred 25 30 35 40

4. **cryptographist**—Poe prided himself on his ability to decipher secret messages. But in “The Gold Bug” is an instance of almost strict deductive logic in the solution of a cryptogram. 5. **Champollion**—Jean François Champollion (1790-1832) first deciphered an important passage in Egyptian hieroglyphics in 1821. American magazines in Poe’s lifetime were filled with references to the new science of Egyptology. 31. **Kanadaw**—In 2848 Kanadaw has apparently replaced American as a continental adjective. 33. **saloons**—salons. Cf. the saloon of a modern steamship. 39. **route**—In 1845 Asa Whitney laid before Congress the first plan presented to that body for building a transcontinental railroad, but the route was still under debate when Poe wrote.

years ago! In fact, he goes so far as to assert that actual traces of a road are still discernible—traces referable to a period quite as remote as that mentioned. The track, it appears, was *double* only; ours, you know, has twelve paths; and three or four new ones are in preparation. The ancient rails were very slight,  
 5 and placed so close together as to be, according to modern notions, quite frivolous, if not dangerous in the extreme. The present width of track—fifty feet—is considered, indeed, scarcely secure enough. For my part, I make no doubt that a track of some sort *must* have existed in very remote times, as Pundit asserts; for nothing can be clearer, to my mind, than that, at some period—not  
 10 less than seven centuries ago, certainly—the Northern and Southern Kanadaw continents were *united*; the Kanawdians, then, would have been driven, by necessity, to a great railroad across the continent.

*April 5.*—I am almost devoured by *ennui*. Pundit is the only conversible person on board; and he, poor soul! can speak of nothing but antiquities. He has  
 15 been occupied all the day in the attempt to convince me that the ancient Amricans *governed themselves!*—did ever anybody hear of such an absurdity?—that they existed in a sort of every-man-for-himself confederacy, after the fashion of the “prairie dogs” that we read of in fable. He says that they started with the queerest idea conceivable, viz: that all men are born free and equal—  
 20 this in the very teeth of the laws of *gradation* so visibly impressed upon all things both in the moral and physical universe. Every man “voted,” as they called it—that is to say, meddled with public affairs—until, at length, it was discovered that what is everybody’s business is nobody’s, and that the “Republic” (so the absurd thing was called) was without a government at all. It  
 25 is related, however, that the first circumstance which disturbed, very particularly, the self-complacency of the philosophers who constructed this “Republic,” was the startling discovery that universal suffrage gave opportunity for fraudulent schemes, by means of which any desired number of votes might at any time be polled, without the possibility of prevention or even detection,  
 30 by any party which should be merely villainous enough not to be ashamed of the fraud. A little reflection upon this discovery sufficed to render evident the consequences, which were that rascality *must* predominate—in a word, that a republican government *could* never be anything but a rascally one. While the philosophers, however, were busied in blushing at their stupidity in not having  
 35 foreseen these inevitable evils, and intent upon the invention of new theories, the matter was put to an abrupt issue by a fellow of the name of *Mob*, who took everything into his own hands and set up a despotism, in comparison with which those of the fabulous Zeros and Hellofagabaluses were respectable and delectable. This Mob (a foreigner, by the by), is said to have been the  
 40 most odious of all men that ever encumbered the earth. He was a giant in stature—insolent, rapacious, filthy; had the gall of a bullock with the heart of an hyena and the brains of a peacock. He died, at length, by dint of his own energies, which exhausted him. Nevertheless, he had his uses, as everything has, however vile, and taught mankind a lesson which to this day it is in no  
 45 danger of forgetting—never to run directly contrary to the natural analogies.

38. Zeros . . . Hellofagabaluses—Nero; Heliogabalus. 39. foreigner—a hit at the American fallacy that foreign-born residents are responsible for lawlessness.

As for Republicanism, no analogy could be found for it upon the face of the earth—unless we except the case of the “prairie dogs,” an exception which seems to demonstrate, if anything, that democracy is a very admirable form of government—for dogs.

*April 6.*—Last night had a fine view of Alpha Lyrae, whose disk, through 5 our captain’s spy-glass, subtends an angle of half a degree, looking very much as our sun does to the naked eye on a misty day. Alpha Lyrae, although so very much larger than our sun, by the by, resembles him closely as regards its spots, its atmosphere, and in many other particulars. It is only within the last century, Pundit tells me, that the binary relation existing between these two 10 orbs began even to be suspected. The evident motion of our system in the heavens was (strange to say!) referred to an orbit about a prodigious star in the centre of the galaxy. About this star, or at all events about a centre of gravity common to all the globes of the Milky Way and supposed to be near Alcyone in the Pleiades, every one of these globes was declared to be revolving, 15 our own performing the circuit in a period of 117,000,000 of years! *We*, with our present lights, our vast telescopic improvements and so forth, of course find it difficult to comprehend *the ground* of an idea such as this. Its first propagator was one Mudler. He was led, we must presume, to this wild hypothesis by mere analogy in the first instance; but, this being the case, he 20 should have at least adhered to analogy in its development. A great central orb *was*, in fact, suggested; so far Mudler was consistent. This central orb, however, dynamically, should have been greater than all its surrounding orbs taken together. The question might then have been asked—“Why do we not see it?”—*we*, especially, who occupy the mid region of the cluster—the very 25 locality *near* which, at least, must be situated this inconceivable central sun. The astronomer, perhaps, at this point, took refuge in the suggestion of non-luminosity; and here analogy was suddenly let fall. But even admitting the central orb non-luminous, how did he manage to explain its failure to be rendered visible by the incalculable host of glorious suns glaring in all directions about it? No doubt what he finally maintained was merely a centre of 30 gravity common to all the revolving orbs—but here again analogy must have been let fall. Our system revolves, it is true, about a common centre of gravity, but it does this in connection with and in consequence of a material sun whose mass more than counterbalances the rest of the system. The mathematical 35 circle is a curve composed of an infinity of straight lines; but this idea of the circle—this idea of it which, in regard to all earthly geometry, we consider as merely the mathematical, in contradistinction from the practical, idea—is, in sober fact, the *practical* conception which alone we have any right to entertain in respect to those Titanic circles with which we have to deal, at least in 40 fancy, when we suppose our system, with its fellows, revolving about a point in the centre of the galaxy. Let the most vigorous of human imaginations but

**1. Republicanism**—the form of government, not the party (yet unborn). **5. Alpha Lyrae**—Vega, the fourth brightest star in the sky. But under the most powerful modern telescopes no star is ever more than a point of light. Poe’s description is entirely fanciful. **10. binary relation**—Poe’s fancy rests upon two truths: (1) The constellation of the Lyre contains two famous binary (double) stars; (2) the whole solar system is supposed to be moving in the direction of this constellation. **19. Mudler**—What astronomer Poe has in mind is not clear.



attempt to take a single step towards the comprehension of a circuit so unutterable! It would scarcely be paradoxical to say that a flash of lightning itself, traveling *forever* upon the circumference of this inconceivable circle, would still *forever* be traveling in a straight line. That the path of our sun along such a circumference—that the direction of our system in such an orbit—would, to any human perception, deviate in the slightest degree from a straight line even in a million of years, is a proposition not to be entertained; and yet these ancient astronomers were absolutely cajoled, it appears, into believing that a decisive curvature had become apparent during the brief period of their astronomical history—during the mere point—during the utter nothingness of two or three thousand years! How incomprehensible, that considerations such as this did not at once indicate to them the true state of affairs—that of the binary revolution of our sun and Alpha Lyrae around a common centre of gravity!

*April 7.*—Continued last night our astronomical amusements. Had a fine view of the five Nepturian asteroids, and watched with much interest the putting up of a huge impost on a couple of lintels in the new temple at Daphnis in the moon. It was amusing to think that creatures so diminutive as the lunarians, and bearing so little resemblance to humanity, yet evinced a mechanical ingenuity so much superior to our own. One finds it difficult, too, to conceive the vast masses which these handle so easily, to be as light as our reason tells us they actually are.

*April 8.*—Eureka! Pundit is in his glory. A balloon from Kanadaw spoke us to-day and threw on board several late papers: they contain some exceedingly curious information relative to Kanawdian or rather to Amriccan antiquities. You know, I presume, that laborers have for some months been employed in preparing the ground for a new fountain at Paradise, the emperor's principal pleasure garden. Paradise, it appears, has been, *literally* speaking, an island time out of mind—that is to say, its northern boundary was always (as far back as any records extend) a rivulet, or rather a very narrow arm of the sea. This arm was gradually widened until it attained its present breadth—a mile. The whole length of the island is nine miles; the breadth varies materially. The entire area (so Pundit says) was, about eight hundred years ago, densely packed with houses, some of them twenty stories high; land (for some most unaccountable reason) being considered as specially precious just in this vicinity. The disastrous earthquake, however, of the year 2050, so totally uprooted and overwhelmed the town (for it was almost too large to be called a village) that the most indefatigable of our antiquarians have never yet been able to obtain from the site any sufficient data (in the shape of coins, medals or inscriptions) wherewith to build up even the ghost of a theory concerning the manners, customs, &c. &c., of the aboriginal inhabitants. Nearly all that we have hitherto known of them is, that they were a portion of the Knickerbocker tribe of savages infesting the continent at its first discovery by Recorder Riker, a knight of the Golden Fleece. They were by no means uncivilized,

15. *Nepturian asteroids*—The Nepturian asteroids are entirely fanciful. 20. *masses* . . . easily—because of the lesser pull of gravity upon the moon, a much smaller body than the earth. 26. *Paradise*—Manhattan Island. 43. *Riker*—Richard Riker (1773-1842), who served many years as Recorder of the City of New York.

however, but cultivated various arts and even sciences after a fashion of their own. It is related of them that they were acute in many respects, but were oddly afflicted with a monomania for building what, in the ancient Amriccan, was denominated "churches"—a kind of pagoda instituted for the worship of two idols that went by the names of Wealth and Fashion. In the end, it is said, the island became, nine-tenths of it, church. The women, too, it appears, were oddly deformed by a natural protuberance of the region just below the small of the back—although, most unaccountably, this deformity was looked upon altogether in the light of a beauty. One or two pictures of these singular women have, in fact, been miraculously preserved. They look very odd, *very*—like something between a turkey-cock and a dromedary.

Well, these few details are nearly all that have descended to us respecting the ancient Knickerbockers. It seems, however, that while digging in the centre of the emperor's garden (which, you know, covers the whole island,) some of the workmen unearthed a cubical and evidently chiseled block of granite, weighing several hundred pounds. It was in good preservation, having received, apparently, little injury from the convulsion which entombed it. On one of its surfaces was a marble slab with (only think of it!) *an inscription—a legible inscription*. Pundit is in ecstasies. Upon detaching the slab, a cavity appeared, containing a leaden box filled with various coins, a long scroll of names, several documents which appear to resemble newspapers, with other matters of intense interest to the antiquarian! There can be no doubt that all these are genuine Amriccan relics belonging to the tribe called Knickerbocker. The papers thrown on board our balloon are filled with fac-similes of the coins, MSS., typography, &c. &c. I copy for your amusement the Knickerbocker inscription on the marble slab:—

THIS CORNER STONE OF A MONUMENT TO THE  
MEMORY OF  
GEORGE WASHINGTON,  
WAS LAID WITH APPROPRIATE CEREMONIES ON THE  
19TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 1847,  
THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE SURRENDER OF  
LORD CORNWALLIS  
TO GENERAL WASHINGTON AT YORKTOWN,  
A.D. 1781,  
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE  
WASHINGTON MONUMENT ASSOCIATION OF THE  
CITY OF NEW YORK.

This, as I give it, is a verbatim translation done by Pundit himself, so there *can* be no mistake about it. From the few words thus preserved, we glean several important items of knowledge, not the least interesting of which is the fact that a thousand years ago *actual* monuments had fallen into disuse—as was all very proper—the people contenting themselves, as we do now, with a mere

7. *protuberance*—the bustle. 15. *granite*—For a picture of the proposed monument to Washington here satirized by Poe, see J. G. Wilson, *Memorial History of the City of New York*, 1893, Vol. III, p. 409. It was planned for Hamilton Square.

- indication of the design to erect a monument at some future time; a corner-stone being cautiously laid by itself "solitary and alone" (excuse me for quoting the great Amriccan poet Benton!) as a guarantee of the magnanimous *intention*. We ascertain, too, very distinctly, from this admirable inscription, the
- 5 how, as well as the where and the what, of the great surrender in question. As to the *where*, it was Yorktown (wherever that was), and as to the *what*, it was General Cornwallis (no doubt some wealthy dealer in corn). *He* was surrendered. The inscription commemorates the surrender of—what?—why, "of Lord Cornwallis." The only question is what could the savages wish him sur-
- 10 rendered for. But when we remember that these savages were undoubtedly cannibals, we are led to the conclusion that they intended him for sausage. As to the *how* of the surrender, no language can be more explicit. Lord Cornwallis was surrendered (for sausage) "under the auspices of the Washington Monument Association"—no doubt a charitable institution for the depositing
- 15 of corner-stones.—But Heaven bless me! what is the matter? Ah! I see—the balloon has collapsed, and we shall have a tumble into the sea. I have, therefore, only time enough to add that, from a hasty inspection of fac-similes of newspapers, &c., I find that *the* great men in those days among the Amriccans were one John, a smith, and one Zacchary, a tailor.
- 20 Good bye, until I see you again. Whether you ever get this letter or not is a point of little importance, as I write altogether for my own amusement. I shall cork the MS. up in a bottle however, and throw it into the sea.

Yours everlastingly,

PUNDITA

19. smith . . . Zacchary—John Smith was apparently some mediocrity who came unde Poe's eye in New York. In 1848 Zachary Taylor was elected President of the United States.

# ABRAHAM LINCOLN

1809-1865

## I. THE YOUNG FRONTIERSMAN (1809-1834)

- 1809 Born in Hardin County, Kentucky, February 12, son of Thomas and Nancy Hanks Lincoln.
- 1816 Moved with his family to southern Indiana. Had less than twelve months of schooling in five different country schools, but read the Bible, Aesop, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, Weems's *Life of Washington*, a history of the United States, Burns, Shakespeare.
- 1828 Made a journey as a hired hand on a flatboat to New Orleans.
- 1830 Migrated with his family in March to Macon County, Illinois, then to Coles County.
- 1831-1834 Clerk in a country store at New Salem, Illinois. Also split rails and, during spare time, studied law.
- 1832 Candidate for the Illinois House of Representatives. Served in the Black Hawk War five weeks; practiced surveying.

## II. DEBATER OF SLAVERY ISSUES (1834-1860)

- 1834 Elected to the legislature; reelected in 1836, 1838, and 1840.
- 1842 Married Mary Todd, overcoming melancholia accentuated by death of his fiancée, Ann Rutledge, in 1835.
- 1847-1849 Served a term in the national House of Representatives as a Whig.
- 1849-1854 Formed a successful law partnership with W. H. Herndon at Springfield, Illinois.
- 1858 Debates with Stephen A. Douglas in various Illinois towns on the subject of slavery brought him national attention.
- 1860 Delivered the Cooper Institute Speech February 27. Followed by his nomination for the Presidency of the United States in May.

## III. THE WAR PRESIDENT (1861-1865)

- 1861 Farewell Remarks at Springfield, February 11; First Inaugural Address, March 4.
- 1863 November 19, Address at the Dedication of the National Cemetery at Gettysburg.
- 1865 March 4, the Second Inaugural Address.  
April 14, assassinated in Ford's Theatre, Washington, and died the next day.

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No one in the nineteenth century left a greater impress on American life and thought than Abraham Lincoln. This impression he made through his ability to phrase his utterances so compellingly that the people yielded ready assent to his logic. Clarity of thought, a sure grasp of facts, power of analysis, and flexibility of style characterize Lincoln's prose. His style is essentially the man—free from academic exhibitions, candid, poised, tolerant, compassionate, devoted, sincere. Whether he addressed himself to his neighbors at Springfield, or reasoned with the cultivated men and women in Cooper Institute, or solaced a bereaved mother, or voiced in a dedicatory address the ideals of a civilization, Lincoln knew how to adapt his medium to the situation in hand. He had from his frontier upbringing a homely utterance, a gift of humor and story-telling, sharpened by his legal experience, which, together with an ambition to get on, changed him by slow degrees from a country politician to an artist in statecraft, a spokesman of mankind itself. "What I do say is that no man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent"—in such homely and sagacious utterances is the pith of the American contribution to world thought.

The text of the Lincoln selections is that of the Nicolay and Hay edition of *The Complete Works*.

## ADDRESS AT COOPER INSTITUTE, NEW YORK

This speech, delivered February 27, 1860, at Cooper Institute, New York City, was significant because it made Lincoln favorably known to the Republican leaders in the East and made it possible a few months later to secure their consent to his nomination to the Presidency. It illustrates Lincoln's ability as a reasoner.

*Mr. President and Fellow-Citizens of New York:* The facts with which I shall deal this evening are mainly old and familiar; nor is there anything new in the general use I shall make of them. If there shall be any novelty, it will be in the mode of presenting the facts, and the inferences and observations following that presentation. In his speech last autumn at Columbus, Ohio, as reported in the "New-York Times," Senator Douglas said:

6. **Senator Douglas**—Stephen A. Douglas (1813-1861), United States Senator from Illinois, with whom Lincoln held the famous Lincoln-Douglas Debates in 1858.

"Our fathers, when they framed the government under which we live, understood this question just as well, and even better, than we do now."

I fully indorse this, and I adopt it as a text for this discourse. I so adopt it because it furnishes a precise and an agreed starting-point for a discussion between Republicans and that wing of the Democracy headed by Senator Douglas. It simply leaves the inquiry: What was the understanding those fathers had of the question mentioned? 5

What is the frame of government under which we live? The answer must be, "The Constitution of the United States." That Constitution consists of the original, framed in 1787, and under which the present government first went into operation, and twelve subsequently framed amendments, the first ten of which were framed in 1789. 10

Who were our fathers that framed the Constitution? I suppose the "thirty-nine" who signed the original instrument may be fairly called our fathers who framed that part of the present government. It is almost exactly true to say they framed it, and it is altogether true to say they fairly represented the opinion and sentiment of the whole nation at that time. Their names, being familiar to nearly all, and accessible to quite all, need not now be repeated. 15

I take these "thirty-nine," for the present, as being "our fathers who framed the government under which we live." What is the question which, according to the text, those fathers understood "just as well, and even better, than we do now?" 20

It is this: Does the proper division of local from federal authority, or anything in the Constitution, forbid our federal government to control as to slavery in our federal territories? 25

Upon this, Senator Douglas holds the affirmative, and Republicans the negative. This affirmation and denial form an issue; and this issue—this question—is precisely what the text declares our fathers understood "better than we." Let us now inquire whether the "thirty-nine," or any of them, ever acted upon this question; and if they did, how they acted upon it—how they expressed that better understanding. In 1784, three years before the Constitution, the United States then owning the Northwestern Territory, and no other, the Congress of the Confederation had before them the question of prohibiting slavery in that territory; and four of the "thirty-nine" who afterward framed the Constitution were in that Congress, and voted on that question. Of these, Roger Sherman, Thomas Mifflin, and Hugh Williamson voted for the prohibition, thus showing that, in their understanding, no line dividing local from federal authority, nor anything else, properly forbade the federal government to control as to slavery in federal territory. The other of the four, James McHenry, voted against the prohibition, showing that for some cause he thought it improper to vote for it. 30 35 40

In 1787, still before the Constitution, but while the convention was in ses-

**5. wing of the Democracy**—The Northern Democrats were willing to accept the Dred Scott opinion, and any decision which the Supreme Court might make as to slavery. **32. Northwestern Territory**—The region north of the Ohio River between Pennsylvania and the Mississippi River, comprising the present states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and part of Minnesota, was ceded to the United States by Great Britain in 1783.

sion framing it, and while the Northwestern Territory still was the only territory owned by the United States, the same question of prohibiting slavery in the territory again came before the Congress of the Confederation; and two more of the "thirty-nine" who afterward signed the Constitution were in that Congress, and voted on the question. They were William Blount and William  
 5 Few; and they both voted for the prohibition—thus showing that in their understanding no line dividing local from federal authority, nor anything else, properly forbade the federal government to control as to slavery in federal territory. This time the prohibition became a law, being part of what is now  
 10 well known as the Ordinance of '87.

The question of federal control of slavery in the territories seems not to have been directly before the convention which framed the original Constitution; and hence it is not recorded that the "thirty-nine," or any of them, while engaged on that instrument, expressed any opinion on that precise question.

15 In 1789, by the first Congress which sat under the Constitution, an act was passed to enforce the Ordinance of '87, including the prohibition of slavery in the Northwestern Territory. The bill for this act was reported by one of the "thirty-nine"—Thomas Fitzsimmons, then a member of the House of Representatives from Pennsylvania. It went through all its stages without a word  
 20 of opposition, and finally passed both branches without ayes and nays, which is equivalent to a unanimous passage. In this Congress there were sixteen of the thirty-nine fathers who framed the original Constitution. They were John Langdon, Nicholas Gilman, William S. Johnson, Roger Sherman, Robert Morris, Thomas Fitzsimmons, William Few, Abraham Baldwin, Rufus King,  
 25 William Paterson, George Clymer, Richard Bassett, George Read, Pierce Butler, Daniel Carroll, and James Madison.

This shows that, in their understanding, no line dividing local from federal authority, nor anything in the Constitution, properly forbade Congress to prohibit slavery in the federal territory; else both their fidelity to correct principle, and their oath to support the Constitution, would have constrained them  
 30 to oppose the prohibition.

Again, George Washington, another of the "thirty-nine," was then President of the United States, and as such approved and signed the bill, thus completing its validity as a law, and thus showing that, in his understanding, no line  
 35 dividing local from federal authority, nor anything in the Constitution, forbade the federal government to control as to slavery in federal territory.

No great while after the adoption of the original Constitution, North Carolina ceded to the federal government the country now constituting the state of Tennessee; and a few years later Georgia ceded that which now constitutes the  
 40 states of Mississippi and Alabama. In both deeds of cession it was made a condition by the ceding states that the federal government should not prohibit slavery in the ceded country. Besides this, slavery was then actually in the ceded country. Under these circumstances, Congress, on taking charge of these countries, did not absolutely prohibit slavery within them. But they did interfere

10. Ordinance of '87—This provided for territorial government, public education, and religious freedom, and forbade slavery. 37-38. North Carolina ceded—in 1790. Georgia ceded her claims in 1802.

with it—take control of it—even there, to a certain extent. In 1798 Congress organized the territory of Mississippi. In the act of organization they prohibited the bringing of slaves into the territory from any place without the United States, by fine, and giving freedom to slaves so brought. This act passed both branches of Congress without yeas and nays. In that Congress were three of the “thirty-nine” who framed the original Constitution. They were John Langdon, George Read, and Abraham Baldwin. They all probably voted for it. Certainly they would have placed their opposition to it upon record if, in their understanding, any line dividing local from federal authority, or anything in the Constitution, properly forbade the federal government to control as to slavery in federal territory.

In 1803 the federal government purchased the Louisiana country. Our former territorial acquisitions came from certain of our own states; but this Louisiana country was acquired from a foreign nation. In 1804 Congress gave a territorial organization to that part of it which now constitutes the state of Louisiana. New Orleans, lying within that part, was an old and comparatively large city. There were other considerable towns and settlements, and slavery was extensively and thoroughly intermingled with the people. Congress did not, in the Territorial Act, prohibit slavery; but they did interfere with it—take control of it—in a more marked and extensive way than they did in the case of Mississippi. The substance of the provision therein made in relation to slaves was:

1st. That no slave should be imported into the territory from foreign parts.

2nd. That no slave should be carried into it who had been imported into the United States since the first day of May, 1798.

3rd. That no slave should be carried into it, except by the owner, and for his own use as a settler; the penalty in all the cases being a fine upon the violator of the law, and freedom to the slave.

This act also was passed without ayes or nays. In the Congress which passed it there were two of the “thirty-nine.” They were Abraham Baldwin and Jonathan Dayton. As stated in the case of Mississippi, it is probable they both voted for it. They would not have allowed it to pass, without recording their opposition to it if, in their understanding, it violated either the line properly dividing local from federal authority, or any provision of the Constitution.

In 1819-20 came and passed the Missouri question. Many votes were taken, by yeas and nays, in both branches of Congress, upon the various phases of the general question. Two of the “thirty-nine”—Rufus King and Charles Pinckney—were members of that Congress. Mr. King steadily voted for slavery prohibition and against all compromises, while Mr. Pinckney as steadily voted against slavery prohibition and against all compromises. By this, Mr. King showed that, in his understanding, no line dividing local from federal authority, nor anything in the Constitution, was violated by Congress prohibiting slavery in federal territory; while Mr. Pinckney, by his votes, showed that, in his understanding, there was some sufficient reason for opposing such prohibition in that case.

35. **Missouri question**—that is, whether Missouri should be admitted as a slave state to balance the admission of Maine as a free state.



The cases I have mentioned are the only acts of the "thirty-nine," or of any of them, upon the direct issue, which I have been able to discover.

To enumerate the persons who thus acted as being four in 1784, two in 1787, seventeen in 1789, three in 1798, two in 1804, and two in 1819-20, there would be thirty of them. But this would be counting John Langdon, Roger Sherman, William Few, Rufus King, and George Read each twice, and Abraham Baldwin three times. The true number of those of the "thirty-nine" whom I have shown to have acted upon the question which, by the text, they understood better than we, is twenty-three, leaving sixteen not shown to have acted upon it in any way.

Here, then, we have twenty-three out of our thirty-nine fathers "who framed the government under which we live," who have, upon their official responsibility and their corporal oaths, acted upon the very question which the text affirms they "understood just as well, and even better, than we do now"; and twenty-one of them—a clear majority of the whole "thirty-nine"—so acting upon it as to make them guilty of gross political impropriety and willful perjury if, in their understanding, any proper division between local and federal authority, or anything in the Constitution they had made themselves, and sworn to support, forbade the federal government to control as to slavery in the federal territories. Thus the twenty-one acted; and, as actions speak louder than words, so actions under such responsibility speak still louder.

Two of the twenty-three voted against congressional prohibition of slavery in the federal territories, in the instances in which they acted upon the question. But for what reasons they so voted is not known. They may have done so because they thought a proper division of local from federal authority, or some provision or principle of the Constitution, stood in the way; or they may, without any such question, have voted against the prohibition on what appeared to them to be sufficient grounds of expediency. No one who has sworn to support the Constitution can conscientiously vote for what he understands to be an unconstitutional measure, however expedient he may think it; but one may and ought to vote against a measure which he deems constitutional if, at the same time, he deems it inexpedient. It, therefore, would be unsafe to set down even the two who voted against the prohibition as having done so because, in their understanding, any proper division of local from federal authority, or anything in the Constitution, forbade the federal government to control as to slavery in federal territory.

The remaining sixteen of the "thirty-nine," so far as I have discovered, have left no record of their understanding upon the direct question of federal control of slavery in the federal territories. But there is much reason to believe that their understanding upon that question would not have appeared different from that of their twenty-three compeers, had it been manifested at all.

For the purpose of adhering rigidly to the text, I have purposely omitted whatever understanding may have been manifested by any person, however distinguished, other than the thirty-nine fathers who framed the original Constitution; and, for the same reason, I have also omitted whatever understanding may have been manifested by any of the "thirty-nine" even on any other

phase of the general question of slavery. If we should look into their acts and declarations on those other phases, as the foreign slave-trade, and the morality and policy of slavery generally, it would appear to us that on the direct question of federal control of slavery in federal territories, the sixteen, if they had acted at all, would probably have acted just as the twenty-three did. Among 5 that sixteen were several of the most noted anti-slavery men of those times—as Dr. Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and Gouverneur Morris—while there was not one now known to have been otherwise, unless it may be John Rutledge, of South Carolina.

The sum of the whole is that of our thirty-nine fathers who framed the 10 original Constitution, twenty-one—a clear majority of the whole—certainly understood that no proper division of local from federal authority, nor any part of the Constitution, forbade the federal government to control slavery in the federal territories; while all the rest had probably the same understanding. Such, unquestionably, was the understanding of our fathers who framed 15 the original Constitution; and the text affirms that they understood the question “better than we.”

But, so far, I have been considering the understanding of the question manifested by the framers of the original Constitution. In and by the original instrument, a mode was provided for amending it; and, as I have already stated, 20 the present frame of “the government under which we live” consists of that original, and twelve amendatory articles framed and adopted since. Those who now insist that federal control of slavery in federal territories violates the Constitution, point us to the provisions which they suppose it thus violates; and, as I understand, they all fix upon provisions in these amendatory 25 articles, and not in the original instrument. The Supreme Court, in the *Dred Scott* case, plant themselves upon the Fifth Amendment, which provides that no person shall be deprived of “life, liberty, or property without due process of law”; while Senator Douglas and his peculiar adherents plant themselves upon the Tenth Amendment, providing that “the powers not delegated to the 30 United States by the Constitution” “are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.”

Now, it so happens that these amendments were framed by the first Congress which sat under the Constitution—the identical Congress which passed 35 the act, already mentioned, enforcing the prohibition of slavery in the Northwestern Territory. Not only was it the same Congress, but they were the identical, same individual men who, at the same session, and at the same time within the session, had under consideration, and in progress toward maturity, these constitutional amendments, and this act prohibiting slavery in all the territory the nation then owned. The constitutional amendments were introduced before, and passed after, the act enforcing the Ordinance of '87; so that, 40 during the whole pendency of the act to enforce the ordinance, the constitutional amendments were also pending.

**26-27. *Dred Scott* case**—*Dred Scott*, a slave, had been taken by his master to the free state of Illinois and to the region west of the Mississippi where slavery had been forbidden. Returning to Missouri, he sued for freedom on the ground that residence in free territory had made him free. The case was finally decided against him by the Supreme Court in 1857.

The seventy-six members of that Congress, including sixteen of the framers of the original Constitution, as before stated, were pre-eminently our fathers who framed that part of "the government under which we live" which is now claimed as forbidding the federal government to control slavery in the federal territories.

Is it not a little presumptuous in anyone at this day to affirm that the two things which that Congress deliberately framed, and carried to maturity at the same time, are absolutely inconsistent with each other? And does not such affirmation become impudently absurd when coupled with the other affirmation, from the same mouth, that those who did the two things alleged to be inconsistent, understood whether they really were inconsistent better than we—better than he who affirms that they are inconsistent?

It is surely safe to assume that the thirty-nine framers of the original Constitution, and the seventy-six members of the Congress which framed the amendments thereto, taken together, do certainly include those who may be fairly called "our fathers who framed the government under which we live." And so assuming, I defy any man to show that any one of them ever, in his whole life, declared that, in his understanding, any proper division of local from federal authority, or any part of the Constitution, forbade the federal government to control as to slavery in the federal territories. I go a step further. I defy anyone to show that any living man in the whole world ever did, prior to the beginning of the present century (and I might almost say prior to the beginning of the last half of the present century), declare that, in his understanding, any proper division of local from federal authority, or any part of the Constitution, forbade the federal government to control as to slavery in the federal territories. To those who now so declare I give not only "our fathers who framed the government under which we live," but with them all other living men within the century in which it was framed, among whom to search, and they shall not be able to find the evidence of a single man agreeing with them.

Now, and here, let me guard a little against being misunderstood. I do not mean to say we are bound to follow implicitly in whatever our fathers did. To do so would be to discard all the lights of current experience—to reject all progress, all improvement. What I do say is, that if we would supplant the opinions and policy of our fathers in any case, we should do so upon evidence so conclusive, and argument so clear, that even their great authority, fairly considered and weighed, cannot stand; and most surely not in a case whereof we ourselves declare they understood the question better than we.

If any man at this day sincerely believes that a proper division of local from federal authority, or any part of the Constitution, forbids the federal government to control as to slavery in the federal territories, he is right to say so, and to enforce his position by all truthful evidence and fair argument which he can. But he has no right to mislead others who have less access to history, and less leisure to study it, into the false belief that "our fathers who framed the government under which we live" were of the same opinion—thus substituting falsehood and deception for truthful evidence and fair argument. If any man at this day sincerely believes "our fathers who framed the government under

which we live" used and applied principles, in other cases, which ought to have led them to understand that a proper division of local from federal authority, or some part of the Constitution, forbids the federal government to control as to slavery in the federal territories, he is right to say so. But he should, at the same time, brave the responsibility of declaring that, in his opinion, he understands their principles better than they did themselves; and especially should he not shirk that responsibility by asserting that they "understood the question just as well, and even better, than we do now."

But enough! Let all who believe that "our fathers who framed the government under which we live understood this question just as well, and even better, than we do now," speak as they spoke, and act as they acted upon it. This is all Republicans ask—all Republicans desire—in relation to slavery. As those fathers marked it, so let it be again marked, as an evil not to be extended, but to be tolerated and protected only because of and so far as its actual presence among us makes that toleration and protection a necessity. Let all the guaranties those fathers gave it be not grudgingly, but fully and fairly, maintained. For this Republicans contend, and with this, so far as I know or believe, they will be content.

And now, if they would listen—as I suppose they will not—I would address a few words to the Southern people.

I would say to them: You consider yourselves a reasonable and a just people; and I consider that in the general qualities of reason and justice you are not inferior to any other people. Still, when you speak of us Republicans, you do so only to denounce us as reptiles, or, at the best, as no better than outlaws. You will grant a hearing to pirates or murderers, but nothing like it to "Black Republicans." In all your contentions with one another, each of you deems an unconditional condemnation of "Black Republicanism" as the first thing to be attended to. Indeed, such condemnation of us seems to be an indispensable prerequisite—license, so to speak—among you to be admitted or permitted to speak at all. Now, can you or not be prevailed upon to pause and to consider whether this is quite just to us, or even to yourselves? Bring forward your charges and specifications, and then be patient long enough to hear us deny or justify.

You say we are sectional. We deny it. That makes an issue; and the burden of proof is upon you. You produce your proof; and what is it? Why, that our party has no existence in your section—gets no votes in your section. The fact is substantially true; but does it prove the issue? If it does, then in case we should, without change of principle, begin to get votes in your section, we should thereby cease to be sectional. You cannot escape this conclusion; and yet, are you willing to abide by it? If you are, you will probably soon find that we have ceased to be sectional, for we shall get votes in your section this very year. You will then begin to discover, as the truth plainly is, that your proof does not touch the issue. The fact that we get no votes in your section is a fact of your making, and not of ours. And if there be fault in that fact, that fault is primarily yours, and remains so until you show that we repel you by some wrong principle or practice. If we do repel you by any wrong principle or practice, the fault is ours; but this brings you to where you ought to have

started—to a discussion of the right or wrong of our principle. If our principle, put in practice, would wrong your section for the benefit of ours, or for any other object, then our principle, and we with it, are sectional, and are justly opposed and denounced as such. Meet us, then, on the question of  
 5 whether our principle, put in practice, would wrong your section; and so meet us as if it were possible that something may be said on our side. Do you accept the challenge? No! Then you really believe that the principle which “our fathers who framed the government under which we live” thought so clearly right as to adopt it, and indorse it again and again, upon their official oaths, is  
 10 in fact so clearly wrong as to demand your condemnation without a moment’s consideration.

Some of you delight to flaunt in our faces the warning against sectional parties given by Washington in his Farewell Address. Less than eight years before Washington gave that warning, he had, as President of the United States,  
 15 approved and signed an act of Congress enforcing the prohibition of slavery in the Northwestern Territory, which act embodied the policy of the government upon that subject up to and at the very moment he penned that warning; and about one year after he penned it, he wrote Lafayette that he considered that prohibition a wise measure, expressing in the same connection his  
 20 hope that we should at some time have a confederacy of free states.

Bearing this in mind, and seeing that sectionalism has since arisen upon this same subject, is that warning a weapon in your hands against us, or in our hands against you? Could Washington himself speak, would he cast the blame of that sectionalism upon us, who sustain his policy, or upon you, who re-  
 25 pudiate it? We respect that warning of Washington, and we commend it to you, together with his example pointing to the right application of it.

But you say you are conservative—eminently conservative—while we are revolutionary, destructive, or something of the sort. What is conservatism? Is it not adherence to the old and tried, against the new and untried? We  
 30 stick to, contend for, the identical old policy on the point in controversy which was adopted by “our fathers who framed the government under which we live”; while you with one accord reject, and scout, and spit upon that old policy, and insist upon substituting something new. True, you disagree among yourselves as to what that substitute shall be. You are divided on new proposi-  
 35 tions and plans, but you are unanimous in rejecting and denouncing the old policy of the fathers. Some of you are for reviving the foreign slave-trade; some for a congressional slave-code for the territories; some for Congress forbidding the territories to prohibit slavery within their limits; some for maintaining slavery in the territories through the judiciary; some for the “gureat principle” that “if one man would enslave another, no third man should object,”  
 40 fantastically called “popular sovereignty”; but never a man among you is in favor of federal prohibition of slavery in federal territories, according to the practice of “our fathers who framed the government under which we live.” Not one of all your various plans can show a precedent or an advocate in the

13. Farewell Address—Sept. 17, 1796. 18. Lafayette—Cf. *The Writings of Washington*, ed. by Jared Sparks, 1835, Vol. IX, pp. 163-64.

century within which our government originated. Consider, then, whether your claim of conservatism for yourselves, and your charge of destructiveness against us, are based on the most clear and stable foundations.

Again, you say we have made the slavery question more prominent than it formerly was. We deny it. We admit that it is more prominent, but we deny 5 that we made it so. It was not we, but you, who discarded the old policy of the fathers. We resisted, and still resist, your innovation; and thence comes the greater prominence of the question. Would you have that question reduced to its former proportions? Go back to that old policy. What has been will be again, under the same conditions. If you would have the peace of the old 10 times, readopt the precepts and policy of the old times.

You charge that we stir up insurrections among your slaves. We deny it; and what is your proof? Harpers Ferry! John Brown!! John Brown was no Republican; and you have failed to implicate a single Republican in his Harpers Ferry enterprise. If any member of our party is guilty in that mat- 15 ter, you know it, or you do not know it. If you do know it, you are inexcusable for not designating the man and proving the fact. If you do not know it, you are inexcusable for asserting it, and especially for persisting in the assertion after you have tried and failed to make the proof. You need not be told that persisting in a charge which one does not know to be true, is simply malicious slander. 20

Some of you admit that no Republican designedly aided or encouraged the Harpers Ferry affair, but still insist that our doctrines and declarations necessarily lead to such results. We do not believe it. We know we hold no doctrine, and make no declaration, which were not held to and made by "our fathers 25 who framed the government under which we live." You never dealt fairly by us in relation to this affair. When it occurred, some important state elections were near at hand, and you were in evident glee with the belief that, by charging the blame upon us, you could get an advantage of us in those elections. The elections came, and your expectations were not quite fulfilled. Every Re- 30 publican man knew that, as to himself at least, your charge was a slander, and he was not much inclined by it to cast his vote in your favor. Republican doctrines and declarations are accompanied with a continual protest against any interference with your slaves, or with you about your slaves. Surely, this does not encourage them to revolt. True, we do, in common with "our fathers who 35 framed the government under which we live," declare our belief that slavery is wrong; but the slaves do not hear us declare even this. For anything we say or do, the slaves would scarcely know there is a Republican party. I believe they would not, in fact, generally know it but for your misrepresentations of us in their hearing. In your political contests among yourselves, each faction charges 40 the other with sympathy with Black Republicanism; and then, to give point to the charge, defines Black Republicanism to simply be insurrection, blood, and thunder among the slaves.

Slave insurrections are no more common now than they were before the

**13. Harpers Ferry! John Brown!!**—On Oct. 16, 1859, Brown with nineteen followers seized the United States arsenal at the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers, was caught, tried, and later executed for treason and for conspiracy to free slaves.

Republican party was organized. What induced the Southampton insurrection, twenty-eight years ago, in which at least three times as many lives were lost as at Harpers Ferry? You can scarcely stretch your very elastic fancy to the conclusion that Southampton was "got up by Black Republicanism." In the present state of things in the United States, I do not think a general, or even a very extensive, slave insurrection is possible. The indispensable concert of action cannot be attained. The slaves have no means of rapid communication; nor can incendiary freemen, black or white, supply it. The explosive materials are everywhere in parcels; but there neither are, nor can be supplied, the indispensable connecting trains.

Much is said by Southern people about the affection of slaves for their masters and mistresses; and a part of it, at least, is true. A plot for an uprising could scarcely be devised and communicated to twenty individuals before some one of them, to save the life of a favorite master or mistress, would divulge it. This is the rule; and the slave revolution in Haiti was not an exception to it, but a case occurring under peculiar circumstances. The gunpowder plot of British history, though not connected with slaves, was more in point. In that case, only about twenty were admitted to the secret; and yet one of them, in his anxiety to save a friend, betrayed the plot to that friend, and, by consequence, averted the calamity. Occasional poisonings from the kitchen, and open or stealthy assassinations in the field, and local revolts extending to a score or so, will continue to occur as the natural results of slavery; but no general insurrection of slaves, as I think, can happen in this country for a long time. Whoever much fears, or much hopes, for such an event, will be alike disappointed.

In the language of Mr. Jefferson, uttered many years ago, "It is still in our power to direct the process of emancipation and deportation peaceably, and in such slow degrees, as that the evil will wear off insensibly; and their places be, *pari passu*, filled up by free white laborers. If, on the contrary, it is left to force itself on, human nature must shudder at the prospect held up."

Mr. Jefferson did not mean to say, nor do I, that the power of emancipation is in the federal government. He spoke of Virginia; and, as to the power of emancipation, I speak of the slaveholding states only. The federal government, however, as we insist, has the power of restraining the extension of the institution—the power to insure that a slave insurrection shall never occur on any American soil which is now free from slavery.

John Brown's effort was peculiar. It was not a slave insurrection. It was an attempt by white men to get up a revolt among slaves, in which the slaves refused to participate. In fact, it was so absurd that the slaves, with all their ignorance, saw plainly enough it could not succeed. That affair, in its philosophy, corresponds with the many attempts, related in history, at the assassina-

1. **Southampton insurrection**—an uprising of slaves in Southampton County, Virginia, in 1831, led by Nat Turner. About seventy lives were lost. 15. **revolution in Haiti**—the insurrection of 1791 led by Toussaint L'Ouverture. Wordsworth has a sonnet to him. 16. **gunpowder plot**—A plot led by Guy Fawkes to blow up the houses of Parliament, when the Court should be present, was discovered and frustrated Nov. 5, 1605. 29. **pari passu**—with equal pace, as quickly. The quotation is from Jefferson's "Autobiography," *Works* (Memorial ed.), Vol. I, p. 73. Lincoln was not a Negrophile; he wanted the Territories kept free to allow white labor to prosper and determine its own future.

tion of kings and emperors. An enthusiast broods over the oppression of a people till he fancies himself commissioned by Heaven to liberate them. He ventures the attempt, which ends in little else than his own execution. Orsini's attempt on Louis Napoleon, and John Brown's attempt at Harpers Ferry, were, in their philosophy, precisely the same. The eagerness to cast blame on old England in the one case, and on New England in the other, does not disprove the sameness of the two things. 5

And how much would it avail you, if you could, by the use of John Brown, Helper's book, and the like, break up the Republican organization? Human action can be modified to some extent, but human nature cannot be changed. 10 There is a judgment and a feeling against slavery in this nation, which cast at least a million and a half of votes. You cannot destroy that judgment and feeling—that sentiment—by breaking up the political organization which rallies around it. You can scarcely scatter and disperse an army which has been formed into order in the face of your heaviest fire; but if you could, how much would you gain by forcing the sentiment which created it out of the peaceful channel of the ballot box into some other channel? What would that other channel 15 probably be? Would the number of John Browns be lessened or enlarged by the operation?

But you will break up the Union rather than submit to a denial of your constitutional rights. 20

That has a somewhat reckless sound; but it would be palliated, if not fully justified, were we proposing, by the mere force of numbers, to deprive you of some right plainly written down in the Constitution. But we are proposing no such thing. 25

When you make these declarations you have a specific and well-understood allusion to an assumed constitutional right of yours to take slaves into the federal territories, and to hold them there as property. But no such right is specifically written in the Constitution. That instrument is literally silent about any such right. We, on the contrary, deny that such a right has any existence in the Constitution, even by implication. 30

Your purpose, then, plainly stated, is that you will destroy the government, unless you be allowed to construe and force the Constitution as you please, on all points in dispute between you and us. You will rule or ruin in all events.

This, plainly stated, is your language. Perhaps you will say the Supreme Court has decided the disputed constitutional question in your favor. Not quite so. But waiving the lawyer's distinction between *dictum* and decision, the court has decided the question for you in a sort of way. The court has substantially said it is your constitutional right to take slaves into the federal territories, and to hold them there as property. When I say the decision was made in a sort of way, I mean it was made in a divided court, by a bare majority of the judges, 40

3. Orsini's—Felice Orsini attempted to assassinate Napoleon III on Jan. 14, 1858. 9. Helper's book—In *The Impending Crisis in the South, and How to Meet It* (1857) Hinton R. Helper (1829-1909), protagonist of the "poor whites" of North Carolina, attacked slavery from the standpoint of the nonslaveholding Southern whites. Not even Brown's raid was so effective in arousing the slaveholding oligarchy. 37. *dictum* and *decision*—A decision is a judgment given by a competent tribunal; a *dictum* is an opinion expressed by a court upon some question which is not necessary to the decision of the case before it.



and they not quite agreeing with one another in the reasons for making it; that it is so made as that its avowed supporters disagree with one another about its meaning, and that it was mainly based upon a mistaken statement of fact—the statement in the opinion that “the right of property in a slave is distinctly  
5 and expressly affirmed in the Constitution.”

An inspection of the Constitution will show that the right of property in a slave is not “distinctly and expressly affirmed” in it. Bear in mind, the judges do not pledge their judicial opinion that such right is impliedly affirmed in the Constitution; but they pledge their veracity that it is “distinctly and expressly”  
10 affirmed there—“distinctly,” that is, not mingled with anything else—“expressly,” that is, in words meaning just that, without the aid of any inference, and susceptible of no other meaning.

If they had only pledged their judicial opinion that such right is affirmed in the instrument by implication, it would be open to others to show that neither  
15 the word “slave” nor “slavery” is to be found in the Constitution, nor the word “property” even, in any connection with language alluding to the things slave, or slavery; and that wherever in that instrument the slave is alluded to, he is called a “person”; and wherever his master’s legal right in relation to him is alluded to, it is spoken of as “service or labor which may be due”—as a debt  
20 payable in service or labor. Also it would be open to show, by contemporaneous history, that this mode of alluding to slaves and slavery, instead of speaking of them, was employed on purpose to exclude from the Constitution the idea that there could be property in man.

To show all this is easy and certain.

25 When this obvious mistake of the judges shall be brought to their notice, is it not reasonable to expect that they will withdraw the mistaken statement, and reconsider the conclusion based upon it?

And then it is to be remembered that “our fathers who framed the government under which we live”—the men who made the Constitution—decided this  
30 same constitutional question in our favor long ago: decided it without division among themselves when making the decision; without division among themselves about the meaning of it after it was made, and, so far as any evidence is left, without basing it upon any mistaken statement of facts.

Under all these circumstances, do you really feel yourselves justified to break  
35 up this government unless such a court decision as yours is shall be at once submitted to as a conclusive and final rule of political action? But you will not abide the election of a Republican President! In that supposed event, you say, you will destroy the Union; and then, you say, the great crime of having destroyed it will be upon us! That is cool. A highwayman holds a pistol to my  
40 ear, and mutters through his teeth, “Stand and deliver, or I shall kill you, and then you will be a murderer!”

To be sure, what the robber demanded of me—my money—was my own; and I had a clear right to keep it; but it was no more my own than my vote is my own; and the threat of death to me, to extort my money, and the threat  
45 of destruction to the Union, to extort my vote, can scarcely be distinguished in principle.

A few words now to Republicans. It is exceedingly desirable that all parts

of this great confederacy shall be at peace, and in harmony one with another. Let us Republicans do our part to have it so. Even though much provoked, let us do nothing through passion and ill temper. Even though the Southern people will not so much as listen to us, let us calmly consider their demands, and yield to them if, in our deliberate view of our duty, we possibly can. Judg- 5  
ing by all they say and do, and by the subject and nature of their controversy with us, let us determine, if we can, what will satisfy them.

Will they be satisfied if the territories be unconditionally surrendered to them? We know they will not. In all their present complaints against us, the territories are scarcely mentioned. Invasions and insurrections are the rage now. 10  
Will it satisfy them if, in the future, we have nothing to do with invasions and insurrections? We know it will not. We so know, because we know we never had anything to do with invasions and insurrections; and yet this total abstaining does not exempt us from the charge and the denunciation.

The question recurs, What will satisfy them? Simply this: we must not only 15  
let them alone, but we must somehow convince them that we do let them alone. This, we know by experience, is no easy task. We have been so trying to convince them from the very beginning of our organization, but with no success. In all our platforms and speeches we have constantly protested our purpose to let them alone; but this has had no tendency to convince them. Alike 20  
unavailing to convince them is the fact that they have never detected a man of us in any attempt to disturb them.

These natural and apparently adequate means all failing, what will convince them? This, and this only: cease to call slavery wrong, and join them in calling it right. And this must be done thoroughly—done in acts as well as in words. 25  
Silence will not be tolerated—we must place ourselves avowedly with them. Senator Douglas's new sedition law must be enacted and enforced, suppressing all declarations that slavery is wrong, whether made in politics, in presses, in pulpits, or in private. We must arrest and return their fugitive slaves with greedy pleasure. We must pull down our free-state constitutions. The whole 30  
atmosphere must be disinfected from all taint of opposition to slavery, before they will cease to believe that all their troubles proceed from us.

I am quite aware they do not state their case precisely in this way. Most of them would probably say to us, "Let us alone; do nothing to us, and say what you please about slavery." But we do let them alone—have never disturbed 35  
them—so that, after all, it is what we say which dissatisfies them. They will continue to accuse us of doing, until we cease saying.

I am also aware they have not as yet in terms demanded the overthrow of our free-state constitutions. Yet those constitutions declare the wrong of slavery with more solemn emphasis than do all other sayings against it; and when all 40  
these other sayings shall have been silenced, the overthrow of these constitutions will be demanded, and nothing be left to resist the demand. It is nothing to the contrary that they do not demand the whole of this just now. Demanding what they do, and for the reason they do, they can voluntarily stop no-

27. **new sedition law**—The reference is to an act passed during the short war with France in 1798 to suppress criticism on the part of the Jeffersonian Democrats. Lincoln implies that Douglas wishes to revive that principle long reviled by his own party.

where short of this consummation. Holding, as they do, that slavery is morally right and socially elevating, they cannot cease to demand a full national recognition of it as a legal right and a social blessing.

- Nor can we justifiably withhold this on any ground save our conviction  
 5 that slavery is wrong. If slavery is right, all words, acts, laws, and constitutions against it are themselves wrong, and should be silenced and swept away. If it is right, we cannot justly object to its nationality—its universality; if it is wrong, they cannot justly insist upon its extension—its enlargement. All they ask we could readily grant, if we thought slavery right; all we ask they could  
 10 as readily grant, if they thought it wrong. Their thinking it right and our thinking it wrong is the precise fact upon which depends the whole controversy. Thinking it right, as they do, they are not to blame for desiring its full recognition as being right; but thinking it wrong, as we do, can we yield to them? Can we cast our votes with their view, and against our own? In view  
 15 of our moral, social, and political responsibilities, can we do this?

- Wrong as we think slavery is, we can yet afford to let it alone where it is, because that much is due to the necessity arising from its actual presence in the nation; but can we, while our votes will prevent it, allow it to spread into the national territories, and to overrun us here in these free states? If our sense  
 20 of duty forbids this, then let us stand by our duty fearlessly and effectively. Let us be diverted by none of those sophistical contrivances wherewith we are so industriously plied and belabored—contrivances such as groping for some middle ground between the right and the wrong; vain as the search for a man who should be neither a living man nor a dead man; such as a policy of “don’t care” on a question about which all true men do care; such as Union appeals  
 25 beseeching true Union men to yield to Disunionists, reversing the divine rule, and calling, not the sinners, but the righteous to repentance; such as invocations to Washington, imploring men to unsay what Washington said and undo what Washington did.  
 30 Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us, nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to the government, nor of dungeons to ourselves. Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it.

## FAREWELL REMARKS AT SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

An extemporaneous speech delivered in a drizzling rain to his neighbors, February 11, 1861, from the rear platform as the train was about to bear the President-elect off to Washington.

- My Friends:* No one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feeling of sadness  
 35 at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young

27. sinners . . . repentance—Cf. Matt. 9: 13.

to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when or whether ever I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance, I cannot fail. Trusting in Him who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell

## ADDRESS IN INDEPENDENCE HALL, PHILADELPHIA

Another informal address, delivered February 22, 1861, on his way to Washington. Theodore Cuyler (1819-1876), who presided at the meeting, was a Democrat who believed that the Union should be maintained at all costs.

*Mr. Cuyler:* I am filled with deep emotion at finding myself standing in this place, where were collected together the wisdom, the patriotism, the devotion to principle, from which sprang the institutions under which we live. You have kindly suggested to me that in my hands is the task of restoring peace to our distracted country. I can say in return, sir, that all the political sentiments I entertain have been drawn, so far as I have been able to draw them, from the sentiments which originated in and were given to the world from this hall. I have never had a feeling, politically, that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence. I have often pondered over the dangers which were incurred by the men who assembled here and framed and adopted that Declaration. I have pondered over the toils that were endured by the officers and soldiers of the army who achieved that independence. I have often inquired of myself what great principle or idea it was that kept this Confederacy so long together. It was not the mere matter of separation of the colonies from the motherland, but that sentiment in the Declaration of Independence which gave liberty not alone to the people of this country, but hope to all the world, for all future time. It was that which gave promise that in due time the weights would be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all should have an equal chance. This is the sentiment embodied in the Declaration of Independence. Now, my friends, can this country be saved on that basis? If it can, I will consider myself one of the happiest men in the world if I can help to save it. If it cannot be saved upon that principle, it will be truly awful. But if this country cannot be saved without giving up that principle, I was about to say I would rather be assassinated on this spot than surrender it. Now, in my view of the present aspect of affairs, there is no need of bloodshed and war. There is no necessity for it. I am not in favor of such a course; and I may say in advance that there will be no bloodshed unless it is forced upon the government. The government will not use force, unless force is used against it.

My friends, this is wholly an unprepared speech. I did not expect to be called

on to say a word when I came here. I supposed I was merely to do something toward raising a flag. I may, therefore, have said something indiscreet. But I have said nothing but what I am willing to live by, and, if it be the pleasure of Almighty God, to die by.

## FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS

Delivered at the Capitol, March 4, 1861. Ordinances of secession had been adopted shortly before by seven Southern states. The idea in the last paragraph was Secretary Seward's, but Lincoln gave it its final literary form.

5 *Fellow Citizens of the United States:* In compliance with a custom as old as the government itself, I appear before you to address you briefly, and to take in your presence the oath prescribed by the Constitution of the United States to be taken by the President "before he enters on the execution of his office."

I do not consider it necessary at present for me to discuss those matters of  
10 administration about which there is no special anxiety or excitement.

Apprehension seems to exist among the people of the Southern states that by the accession of a Republican administration their property and their peace and personal security are to be endangered. There has never been any reasonable cause for such apprehension. Indeed, the most ample evidence to the contrary has all the while existed and been open to their inspection. It is found  
15 in nearly all the published speeches of him who now addresses you. I do but quote from one of those speeches when I declare that "I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so." Those who nominated and elected me did so with full  
20 knowledge that I had made this and many similar declarations, and had never recanted them. And, more than this, they placed in the platform for my acceptance, and as a law to themselves and to me, the clear and emphatic resolution which I now read:

25 *Resolved,* That the maintenance inviolate of the rights of the states, and especially the right of each state to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively, is essential to that balance of power on which the perfection and endurance of our political fabric depend, and we denounce the lawless invasion by armed force of the soil of any state or territory, no matter under  
30 what pretext, as among the gravest of crimes.

I now reiterate these sentiments; and, in doing so, I only press upon the public attention the most conclusive evidence of which the case is susceptible, that the property, peace, and security of no section are to be in any wise endangered by the now incoming administration. I add, too, that all the protection  
35 which, consistently with the Constitution and the laws, can be given, will be cheerfully given to all the states when lawfully demanded, for whatever cause—as cheerfully to one section as to another.

There is much controversy about the delivering up of fugitives from service

or labor. The clause I now read is as plainly written in the Constitution as any other of its provisions:

No person held to service or labor in one state, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall in consequence of any law or regulation therein be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due. 5

It is scarcely questioned that this provision was intended by those who made it for the reclaiming of what we call fugitive slaves; and the intention of the lawgiver is the law. All members of Congress swear their support to the whole Constitution—to this provision as much as to any other. To the proposition, then, that slaves whose cases come within the terms of this clause “shall be delivered up,” their oaths are unanimous. Now, if they would make the effort in good temper, could they not with nearly equal unanimity frame and pass a law by means of which to keep good that unanimous oath? 10

There is some difference of opinion whether this clause should be enforced by national or by state authority; but surely that difference is not a very material one. If the slave is to be surrendered, it can be of but little consequence to him or to others by which authority it is done. And should any one in any case be content that his oath shall go unkept on a merely unsubstantial controversy as to how it shall be kept? 15 20

Again, in any law upon this subject, ought not all the safeguards of liberty known in civilized and humane jurisprudence to be introduced, so that a free man be not, in any case, surrendered as a slave? And might it not be well at the same time to provide by law for the enforcement of that clause in the Constitution which guarantees that “the citizen of each state shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several states”? 25

I take the official oath today with no mental reservations, and with no purpose to construe the Constitution or laws by any hypercritical rules. And while I do not choose now to specify particular acts of Congress as proper to be enforced, I do suggest that it will be much safer for all, both in official and private stations, to conform to and abide by all those acts which stand unrepealed, than to violate any of them, trusting to find impunity in having them held to be unconstitutional. 30

It is seventy-two years since the first inauguration of a president under our national Constitution. During that period fifteen different and greatly distinguished citizens have, in succession, administered the executive branch of the government. They have conducted it through many perils, and generally with great success. Yet, with all this scope of precedent, I now enter upon the same task for the brief constitutional term of four years under great and peculiar difficulty. A disruption of the federal Union, heretofore only menaced, is now formidably attempted. 35 40

I hold that, in contemplation of universal law and of the Constitution, the union of these states is perpetual. Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all national governments. It is safe to assert that no government proper ever had a provision in its organic law for its own termination. Continue to execute all the express provisions of our national Constitution, 45

and the Union will endure forever—it being impossible to destroy it except by some action not provided for in the instrument itself.

- Again, if the United States be not a government proper, but an association of states in the nature of contract merely, can it, as a contract, be peaceably  
 5 unmade by less than all the parties who made it? One party to a contract may violate it—break it, so to speak; but does it not require all to lawfully rescind it?

- Descending from these general principles, we find the proposition that, in legal contemplation the Union is perpetual confirmed by the history of the  
 10 Union itself. The Union is much older than the Constitution. It was formed, in fact, by the Articles of Association in 1774. It was matured and continued by the Declaration of Independence in 1776. It was further matured, and the faith of all the then thirteen states expressly plighted and engaged that it should be perpetual, by the Articles of Confederation in 1778. And, finally, in 1787  
 15 one of the declared objects for ordaining and establishing the Constitution was “to form a more perfect Union.”

But if the destruction of the Union by one or by a part only of the states be lawfully possible, the Union is less perfect than before the Constitution. having lost the vital element of perpetuity.

- 20 It follows from these views that no state upon its own mere motion can lawfully get out of the Union; that resolves and ordinances to that effect are legally void; and that acts of violence, within any state or states, against the authority of the United States, are insurrectionary or revolutionary according to circumstances.

- 25 I therefore consider that, in view of the Constitution and the laws, the Union is unbroken; and to the extent of my ability I shall take care, as the Constitution itself expressly enjoins upon me, that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the states. Doing this I deem to be only a simple duty on my part; and I shall perform it so far as practicable, unless my rightful masters, the  
 30 American people, shall withhold the requisite means, or in some authoritative manner direct the contrary. I trust this will not be regarded as a menace, but only as the declared purpose of the Union that it will constitutionally defend and maintain itself.

- In doing this there needs to be no bloodshed or violence; and there shall be  
 35 none, unless it be forced upon the national authority. The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the government, and to collect the duties and imposts; but beyond what may be necessary for these objects, there will be no invasion, no using of force against or among the people anywhere. Where hostility to the United States, in  
 40 any interior locality, shall be so great and universal as to prevent competent resident citizens from holding the federal offices, there will be no attempt to force obnoxious strangers among the people for that object. While the strict legal right may exist in the government to enforce the exercise of these offices, the attempt to do so would be so irritating, and so nearly impracticable withal,  
 45 that I deem it better to forego for the time the uses of such offices.

The mails, unless repelled, will continue to be furnished in all parts of the Union. So far as possible, the people everywhere shall have that sense of per-

fect security which is most favorable to calm thought and reflection. The course here indicated will be followed unless current events and experience shall show a modification or change to be proper, and in every case and exigency my best discretion will be exercised according to circumstances actually existing, and with a view and a hope of a peaceful solution of the national troubles and the restoration of fraternal sympathies and affections. 5

That there are persons in one section or another who seek to destroy the Union at all events, and are glad of any pretext to do it, I will neither affirm nor deny; but if there be such, I need address no word to them. To those, however, who really love the Union may I not speak? 10

Before entering upon so grave a matter as the destruction of our national fabric, with all its benefits, its memories, and its hopes, would it not be wise to ascertain precisely why we do it? Will you hazard so desperate a step while there is any possibility that any portion of the ills you fly from have no real existence? Will you, while the certain ills you fly to are greater than all the real ones you fly from—will you risk the commission of so fearful a mistake? 15

All profess to be content in the Union if all constitutional rights can be maintained. Is it true, then, that any right, plainly written in the Constitution, has been denied? I think not. Happily the human mind is so constituted that no party can reach to the audacity of doing this. Think, if you can, of a single instance in which a plainly written provision of the Constitution has ever been denied. If by the mere force of numbers a majority should deprive a minority of any clearly written constitutional right, it might, in a moral point of view, justify revolution—certainly would if such a right were a vital one. But such is not our case. All the vital rights of minorities and of individuals are so plainly assured to them by affirmations and negations, guarantees and prohibitions, in the Constitution, that controversies never arise concerning them. But no organic law can ever be framed with a provision specifically applicable to every question which may occur in practical administration. No foresight can anticipate, nor any document of reasonable length contain, express provisions for all possible questions. Shall fugitives from labor be surrendered by national or by state authority? The Constitution does not expressly say. *May* Congress prohibit slavery in the territories? The Constitution does not expressly say. *Must* Congress protect slavery in the territories? The Constitution does not expressly say. 20 25 30

From questions of this class spring all our constitutional controversies, and we divide upon them into majorities and minorities. If the minority will not acquiesce, the majority must, or the government must cease. There is no other alternative; for continuing the government is acquiescence on one side or the other. 35

If a minority in such case will secede rather than acquiesce, they make a precedent which in turn will divide and ruin them; for a minority of their own will secede from them whenever a majority refuses to be controlled by such minority. For instance, why may not any portion of a new confederacy a year or two hence arbitrarily secede again, precisely as portions of the present Union now claim to secede from it? All who cherish disunion sentiments are now being educated to the exact temper of doing this. 40 45

Is there such perfect identity of interests among the states to compose



a new Union, as to produce harmony only, and prevent renewed secession?

Plainly, the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy. A majority held in restraint by constitutional checks and limitations, and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign of a free people. Whoever rejects it does, of necessity, fly to anarchy or to despotism. Unanimity is impossible; the rule of a minority, as a permanent arrangement, is wholly inadmissible; so that, rejecting the majority principle, anarchy or despotism in some form is all that is left.

I do not forget the position, assumed by some, that constitutional questions are to be decided by the Supreme Court; nor do I deny that such decisions must be binding, in any case, upon the parties to a suit, as to the object of that suit, while they are also entitled to very high respect and consideration in all parallel cases by all other departments of the government. And while it is obviously possible that such decisions may be erroneous in any given case, still the evil effect following it, being limited to that particular case, with the chance that it may be overruled and never become a precedent for other cases, can better be borne than could the evils of a different practice. At the same time, the candid citizen must confess that if the policy of the government, upon vital questions affecting the whole people, is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court, the instant they are made, in ordinary litigation between parties in personal actions, the people will have ceased to be their own rulers, having to that extent practically resigned their government into the hands of that eminent tribunal. Nor is there in this view any assault upon the court or the judges. It is a duty from which they may not shrink to decide cases properly brought before them, and it is no fault of theirs if others seek to turn their decisions to political purposes.

One section of our country believes slavery is right, and ought to be extended, while the other believes it is wrong, and ought not be extended. This is the only substantial dispute. The fugitive-slave clause of the Constitution, and the law for the suppression of the foreign slave-trade, are each as well enforced, perhaps, as any law can ever be in a community where the moral sense of the people imperfectly supports the law itself. The great body of the people abide by the dry legal obligation in both cases, and a few break over in each. This, I think, cannot be perfectly cured; and it would be worse in both cases after the separation of the sections than before. The foreign slave-trade, now imperfectly suppressed, would be ultimately revived, without restriction, in one section, while fugitive slaves, now only partially surrendered, would not be surrendered at all by the other.

Physically speaking, we cannot separate. We cannot remove our respective sections from each other, nor build an impassable wall between them. A husband and wife may be divorced, and go out of the presence and beyond the reach of each other; but the different parts of our country cannot do this. They cannot but remain face to face, and intercourse, either amicable or hostile, must continue between them. Is it possible, then, to make that intercourse more advantageous or more satisfactory after separation than before? Can aliens make treaties easier than friends can make laws? Can treaties be more faithfully enforced between aliens than laws can among friends? Suppose you go to war,

you cannot fight always; and when, after much loss on both sides, and no gain on either, you cease fighting, the identical old questions as to terms of intercourse are again upon you.

This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise 5 their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it. I cannot be ignorant of the fact that many worthy and patriotic citizens are desirous of having the national Constitution amended. While I make no recommendation of amendments, I fully recognize the right- 10 ful authority of the people over the whole subject, to be exercised in either of the modes prescribed in the instrument itself; and I should, under existing circumstances, favor rather than oppose a fair opportunity being afforded the people to act upon it. I will venture to add that to me the convention mode seems preferable, in that it allows amendments to originate with the people 15 themselves, instead of only permitting them to take or reject propositions originated by others not especially chosen for the purpose, and which might not be precisely such as they would wish to either accept or refuse. I understand a proposed amendment to the Constitution—which amendment, however, I have not seen—has passed Congress, to the effect that the federal government shall 20 never interfere with the domestic institutions of the states, including that of persons held to service. To avoid misconstruction of what I have said, I depart from my purpose not to speak of particular amendments so far as to say that, holding such a provision to now be implied constitutional law, I have no objections to its being made express and irrevocable.

The chief magistrate derives all his authority from the people, and they have 25 conferred none upon him to fix terms for the separation of the states. The people themselves can do this also if they choose; but the Executive, as such, has nothing to do with it. His duty is to administer the present government, as it came to his hands, and to transmit it, unimpaired by him, to his successor.

Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the 30 people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world? In our present differences is either party without faith of being in the right? If the Almighty Ruler of Nations, with His eternal truth and justice, be on your side of the North, or on yours of the South, that truth and that justice will surely prevail by the judgment of this great tribunal of the American people. 35

By the frame of the government under which we live, this same people have wisely given their public servants but little power for mischief; and have, with equal wisdom, provided for the return of that little to their own hands at very short intervals. While the people retain their virtue and vigilance, no admin- 40 istration, by any extreme of wickedness or folly, can very seriously injure the government in the short space of four years.

My countrymen, one and all, think calmly and well upon this whole sub- 45 ject. Nothing valuable can be lost by taking time. If there be an object to hurry any of you in hot haste to a step which you would never take deliberately, that object will be frustrated by taking time; but no good object can be frustrated by it. Such of you as are now dissatisfied, still have the old Constitution un-

impaired, and, on the sensitive point, the laws of your own framing under it; while the new administration will have no immediate power, if it would, to change either. If it were admitted that you who are dissatisfied hold the right side in the dispute, there still is no single good reason for precipitate action.

- 5 Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land, are still competent to adjust in the best way all our present difficulty.

- In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you. You can  
10 have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the government, while I shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect, and defend it."

- I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection.  
15 The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle-field and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

## ADDRESS AT THE DEDICATION OF THE GETTYSBURG NATIONAL CEMETERY

Delivered November 19, 1863, at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Edward Everett had just made the formal address of two hours' duration to an audience of perhaps a hundred thousand people. Lincoln had outlined his address, and, at the last, committed it to paper, writing the concluding sentences in pencil after reaching Gettysburg.

- 20 **F**OURSCORE and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

- Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a  
25 final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

- But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will  
30 little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for  
35 which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve

that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

## LETTER TO MRS. BIXBY

The original of this letter has not been found.

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON  
November 21, 1864

5

MRS. BIXBY, Boston, Massachusetts.

*Dear Madam:* I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant-General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

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15

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

## SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS

Delivered March 4, 1865, at the Capitol. For clarity, beauty, and "high seriousness" it takes prominent rank among American speeches.

*Fellow-Countrymen:* At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued, seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

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25

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it—all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide effects, by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would

30

make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.

One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the Southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war; while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it.

Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes his aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered—that of neither has been answered fully.

The Almighty has his own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offences which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through his appointed time, he now wills to remove, and that he gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offence came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to him? Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.

17. judge not . . . —Cf. Matt. 7:1. 19. Woe unto . . . —Cf. Matt. 18:7. 32. The judgments . . . —Cf. Ps. 19:9.

# OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

1809-1894

## I. THE STUDENT (1809-1838)

- 1809 August 29, born at Cambridge, Massachusetts, the eldest son and fourth child of the Rev. Abiel and Sarah Wendell Holmes.
- 1819-24 Attended Cambridge schools.
- 1824 Entered Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts.
- 1825 Summer, entered Harvard College, contributing to the college paper in later years.
- 1829 Graduated from Harvard College, and entered upon the study of law (to 1830).
- 1830 September 16, "Old Ironsides" appeared in the Boston *Daily Advertiser*. Holmes studying medicine in the private school of Dr. James Jackson.
- 1831 November, earliest paper of *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table* series appeared in the *New England Magazine*; second printed in February, 1832.
- 1833 March, sailed for Europe, arriving in England April 26, and going to Paris, where he studied medicine under Louis, Larrey, and others. His studies were interrupted in the springs and summers by trips in France, Holland, Switzerland, Italy, England.
- 1835 December, returned to New York, and thence to Boston.
- 1836 Published *Poems* (Boston); won Boylston Prize for medical essay (and again in 1837); received degree of M.D. from Harvard College.
- 1838 Appointed professor of anatomy in Dartmouth College, his lectures coming in August, September, October (held position to 1840).

## II. THE PROFESSOR (1838-1857)

- 1840 June 15, married Amelia Lee Jackson; lived in Boston.
- 1842 Published *Homoeopathy and Its Kindred Delusions* (Boston).
- 1843 Read paper on "The Contagiousness of Puerperal Fever" before the Boston Society for Medical Improvement (published in Boston; reworked and re-published in 1855).
- 1846 Published *Poems* (London, 1846; Boston, 1852); also *Urania: A Rhymed Lesson* (Boston, 1846).
- 1847 Appointed Parkman professor of anatomy and physiology in the Harvard Medical School (1871, title changed to professor of anatomy).
- 1847-53 Dean of the Medical School.
- 1849 Published *Poems* (Boston).
- 1849-53 Spent summers on farm near Pittsfield, Massachusetts.
- 1851 First class poem for the class of '29.
- 1853 Delivered Lowell Institute lectures on the English poets.

## III. THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE (1857-1894)

- 1857 Holmes named the *Atlantic Monthly*; and, at Lowell's suggestion, continued the *Autocrat* papers (published in book form, Boston, 1858). Holmes a member of The Saturday Club.
- 1860 Published *The Professor at the Breakfast-Table* (Boston, 1859); also *Currents and Counter-Currents in Medical Science* (Boston).
- 1861 Published *Elsie Venner: A Romance of Destiny* (Boston).
- 1862 Published *Songs in Many Keys* (Boston, 1861).
- 1863 Delivered Fourth of July oration in Boston.
- 1864 Published *Soundings from the Atlantic* (Boston, 1863).
- 1867 Published *The Guardian Angel* (Boston).
- 1872 Published *The Poet at the Breakfast-Table* (Boston). The intervening years saw the writing of many medical essays and addresses.
- 1875 Published *Songs of Many Seasons* (Boston).
- 1879 Published *John Lothrop Motley: A Memoir* (Boston, 1878).
- 1880 Made an LL.D. by Harvard; published *The Iron Gate and Other Poems* (Boston).
- 1882 Became professor emeritus at Harvard.
- 1883 Published *Medical Essays* (Boston) and *Pages from an Old Volume of Life* (Boston).
- 1885 Published *Ralph Waldo Emerson* (American Men of Letters series) and *A Mortal Antipathy* (Boston).
- 1886 Trip of three months in Europe, receiving various honorary degrees, the trip being recorded in *Our Hundred Days in Europe* (1887).
- 1887-88 Illness and death of his wife (eldest son, Edward, died, 1884); published *Before the Curfew and Other Poems* (Boston, 1888).
- 1889 Death of Holmes's daughter, Mrs. Sargent.
- 1891 Published *Over the Teacups* (Boston, 1890); *Poetical Works* (Boston).
- 1894 October 7, Holmes died in Boston.
- 1895 *Complete Poetical Works* published.

BIOGRAPHIES: J. T. Morse, Jr., *Life and Letters of Oliver Wendell Holmes*, Houghton Mifflin, 1896; M. A. DeW. Howe, *Holmes of the Breakfast-Table*, Oxford University Press, 1937.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND EDITIONS: G. B. Ives, *A Bibliography of Oliver Wendell Holmes*, Houghton Mifflin, 1907; *Literary History of the United States*, Vol. III, pp. 564-68.

There is no absolutely complete edition, but the *Complete Works of Oliver Wendell Holmes*, Houghton Mifflin, 1891-92, 13 vols. (Riverside edition), is good. There are various formats, such as the Standard Library edition, 1892; the Artists' edition, 1892-96; and the Autocrat edition, 1904. See the *Representative Selections from Oliver Wendell Holmes*, ed. S. I. Hayakawa and H. M. Jones (American Writers Series), American Book Co., 1939. Interesting is Clarence P. Oberndorf, ed., *The Psychiatric Novels of Oliver Wendell Holmes*, Columbia, 1943.

Dr. Holmes made but few claims on immortality, and posterity has obligingly accepted him at his own modest estimation of his merits. One therefore finds in the histories and anthologies that Oliver Wendell Holmes was a charming writer of light verse, and that he wrote those brilliant bits of *causerie*, the Breakfast-Table series. Sometimes it is remembered that he wrote "medicated" novels. And always

he is portrayed as a type-representative of the Boston-Cambridge Brahmin caste. Holmes's reputation has, accordingly, somewhat declined, and he is ranked with the minor authors rather than with the classics of major importance.

A more careful reading of Holmes reveals, however, some reason to distrust the complacency of posterity. Holmes is undoubtedly a distinguished writer of light verse, but then, light verse is not easy to write, and the infallible tact which Holmes brought to the writing of his occasional poems and his *vers de société* results from that art which conceals art. His muse is the last incarnation of the eighteenth-century manner in America—a manner refined and improved upon until the name of Austin Dobson need not cause the shade of Dr. Holmes much uneasiness. And if Holmes was a Brahmin, he saw the strength and weakness of the Brahmin caste with too shrewd an eye to admit dismissing him as merely one of them. Holmes's Brahminism was, as his biographer remarks, not provincial but racial.

There is a Holmes, however, of more importance than the *causeur* and the writer of class poems, and this is the Holmes who battled all his life for intellectual liberty. Because the country has absorbed his reforms, it is difficult to see how important they were; but in essay and novel, in poem and letter, in jest and Breakfast-Table conversation he attacked the still formidable fortress of nineteenth-century Calvinism in the name of humanity and science. In an essay such as the one on Jonathan Edwards he trains all his batteries on intrenchments that were still stoutly defended; and his "medicated" novels present problems not so much medical as confounding to the theologians. Because the guiding principle of the Breakfast-Table series is informality, most readers do not see that Holmes is a brilliant swordsman in the cause of philosophical freedom. And in the field of medicine he relentlessly attacked quackery, carelessness, and smugness. Moreover, he early familiarized his readers with many of the concepts of heredity and evolution which, had they been presented by a less skillful writer, would not have been received. Under the bland and urbane exterior of an author too frequently dismissed as little better than trivial, there is a deadly earnestness in the cause of liberalism. For this reason the editors have ventured to present selections from Holmes which represent another side of his writing than that usually given in the anthologies.

## OLD IRONSIDES

First published in the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, September 16, 1830. The circumstances are explained in the notes which Holmes added to the poem, given below. The poem was then gathered into the *Poems* of 1836, without title, as part of "Poetry: A Metrical Essay"; it was reprinted in the *Boston Book* of 1837; in the "Blue and Gold" edition of the *Poems* (1862) it reappeared as an independent unit; and in the Household and Riverside editions it took its place as part of the "Earlier Poems." Holmes's note is as follows:

"This was the popular name by which the frigate Constitution was known. The poem

was first printed in the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, at the time when it was proposed to break up the old ship as unfit for service. I subjoin the paragraph which led to the writing of the poem. It is from the *Advertiser* of Tuesday, September 14, 1830:—

"*Old Ironsides*.—It has been affirmed upon good authority that the Secretary of the Navy has recommended to the Board of Navy Commissioners to dispose of the frigate Constitution. Since it has been understood that such a step was in contemplation we have heard but one opinion expressed, and that in decided disapprobation of the measure. Such a national object of interest, so endeared to our national pride as Old Ironsides is, should never by any act of our government cease to belong to the Navy, so long as our country



is to be found upon the map of nations. In England it was lately determined by the Admiralty to cut the *Victory*, a one-hundred gun ship (which it will be recollected bore the flag of Lord Nelson at the battle of Trafalgar,) down to a seventy-four, but so loud were the lamentations of the people upon the proposed measure that the intention was abandoned. We confidently anticipate that the Secretary of the Navy will in like manner consult the general wish in regard to the Constitution, and either let her remain in ordinary or rebuild her whenever the public service may require.'—*New York Journal of Commerce*.

"The poem was an impromptu outburst of feeling and was published on the next day but one after reading the above paragraph."

The *Constitution* distinguished itself in the War of 1812 by defeating the British ship *Guerrière* in August, 1812, and by defeating the *Java* in December. Popular opinion resulted in saving the ship for posterity. Holmes's interest was aroused by the fact, among others, that, when he wrote the poem, the *Constitution* was lying in the Charlestown Navy Yard, Boston.

Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!  
 Long has it waved on high,  
 And many an eye has danced to see  
 That banner in the sky;  
 Beneath it rung the battle shout,  
 And burst the cannon's roar;—  
 The meteor of the ocean air  
 Shall sweep the clouds no more!

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,  
 Where knelt the vanquished foe,  
 When winds were hurrying o'er the flood,  
 And waves were white below,  
 No more shall feel the victor's tread,  
 Or know the conquered knee;—  
 The harpies of the shore shall pluck  
 The eagle of the seal!

O better that her shattered hulk  
 Should sink beneath the wave;  
 Her thunders shook the mighty deep,  
 And there should be her grave;

Nail to the mast her holy flag,  
 Set every threadbare sail,  
 And give her to the god of storms,  
 The lightning and the gale!

## THE LAST LEAF

First published in the *Amateur*, March 23, 1831; republished in the *Harbinger*, 1833, the *Laurel*, 1836, and the *Knickerbocker or New York Monthly Magazine*, February, 1836; collected in *Poems*, 1836; part of "Earlier Poems" in the Household edition. In the Riverside edition, the poem is preceded by the following note:

"This poem was suggested by the appearance in one of our streets of a venerable relic of the Revolution, said to be one of the party who threw the tea overboard in Boston Harbor. He was a fine monumental specimen in his cocked hat and knee breeches, with his buckled shoes and his sturdy cane. The smile with which I, as a young man, greeted him, meant no disrespect to an honored fellow-citizen whose costume was out of date, but whose patriotism never changed with years. I do not recall any earlier example of this form of verse, which was commended by the fastidious Edgar Allan Poe, who made a copy of the whole poem which I have in his own handwriting. Good Abraham Lincoln had a great liking for the poem, and repeated it from memory to Governor Andrew, as the governor himself told me."

The subject of the poem was Major Thomas Melville, the grandfather of Herman Melville.

I saw him once before,  
 As he passed by the door,  
 And again  
 The pavement stones resound,  
 As he totters o'er the ground  
 With his cane.

They say that in his prime,  
 Ere the pruning-knife of Time  
 Cut him down,

Not a better man was found  
By the Crier on his round  
Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,  
And he looks at all he meets  
Sad and wan,  
And he shakes his feeble head,  
That it seems as if he said,  
"They are gone."

The mossy marbles rest  
On the lips he has prest  
In their bloom,  
And the names he loved to hear  
Have been carved for many a year  
On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said—  
Poor old lady, she is dead  
Long ago—  
That he had a Roman nose,  
And his cheek was like a rose  
In the snow.

But now his nose is thin,  
And it rests upon his chin  
Like a staff,  
And a crook is in his back,  
And a melancholy crack  
In his laugh.

I know it is a sin  
For me to sit and grin  
At him here;  
But the old three-cornered hat,  
And the breeches, and all that,  
Are so queer!

And if I should live to be  
The last leaf upon the tree  
In the spring,  
Let them smile, as I do now,  
At the old forsaken bough  
Where I cling.

## MY AUNT

First published in the *New England Magazine*, October, 1831; republished in the *Har-*

10 *binger*, 1833; collected into the *Poems* of 1836; in the London *Poems* of 1846 put in the section "Lyrics"; and in the Household edition, under "Earlier Poems."

15 My aunt! my dear unmarried aunt!  
Long years have o'er her flown;  
Yet still she strains the aching clasp  
That binds her virgin zone;  
I know it hurts her,—though she looks 5  
As cheerful as she can;  
20 Her waist is ampler than her life,  
For life is but a span.

My aunt! my poor deluded aunt!  
Her hair is almost gray; 10  
Why will she train that winter curl  
In such a spring-like way?  
25 How can she lay her glasses down,  
And say she reads as well,  
When through a double convex lens 15  
She just makes out to spell?

30 Her father—grandpapa! forgive  
This erring lip its smiles—  
Vowed she should make the finest girl  
Within a hundred miles; 20  
He sent her to a stylish school;  
35 'Twas in her thirteenth June;  
And with her, as the rules required,  
"Two towels and a spoon."

They braced my aunt against a board, 25  
To make her straight and tall;  
They laced her up, they starved her down,  
To make her light and small;  
They pinched her feet, they singed her hair,  
They screwed it up with pins;— 30  
O never mortal suffered more  
45 In penance for her sins.

But when my precious aunt was done,  
My grandsire brought her back;  
(By daylight, lest some rabid youth 35  
Might follow on the track;)  
"Ah!" said my grandsire, as he shook  
Some powder in his pan,\*  
"What could this lovely creature do  
Against a desperate man!" 40

11. Crier—town crier. \* pan—in eighteenth-century muskets the hollow part of the lock, which received the priming.

Alas! nor chariot, nor barouche,  
 Nor bandit cavalcade,  
 Tore from the trembling father's arms  
 His all-accomplished maid.

For her how happy had it been!  
 And Heaven had spared to me  
 To see one sad, ungathered rose  
 On my ancestral tree.

45

## THE BALLAD OF THE OYSTERMAN

First published in the *Amateur*, July 17, 1830; then in the *Harbinger*, 1833; collected into *Poems* (1836); became part of "Miscellaneous Poems (1830, etc.)" of the Household edition, and part of "Verses from the Oldest Portfolio" in the Riverside edition. The poem is amusing in itself; the student should also note the implied attack upon some of the stock in trade of romantic love poetry.

It was a tall young oysterman lived by the river-side,  
 His shop was just upon the bank, his boat was on the tide;  
 The daughter of a fisherman, that was so straight and slim,  
 Lived over on the other bank, right opposite to him.

It was the pensive oysterman that saw a lovely maid, 5  
 Upon a moonlight evening, a sitting in the shade;  
 He saw her wave her handkerchief, as much as if to say,  
 "I'm wide awake, young oysterman, and all the folks away."

Then up arose the oysterman, and to himself said he,  
 "I guess I'll leave the skiff at home, for fear that folks should see; 10  
 I read it in the story-book, that, for to kiss his dear,  
 Leander swam the Hellespont,—and I will swim this here."

And he has leaped into the waves, and crossed the shining stream,  
 And he has clambered up the bank, all in the moonlight gleam;  
 O there were kisses sweet as dew, and words as soft as rain,— 15  
 But they have heard her father's step, and in he leaps again!

Out spoke the ancient fisherman,—“O what was that, my daughter?”  
 “’T was nothing but a pebble, sir, I threw into the water.”  
 “And what is that, pray tell me, love, that paddles off so fast?”  
 “It's nothing but a porpoise, sir, that's been a swimming past.” 20

Out spoke the ancient fisherman,—“Now bring me my harpoon!  
 I'll get into my fishing-boat, and fix the fellow soon.”  
 Down fell that pretty innocent, as falls a snow-white lamb,  
 Her hair drooped round her pallid cheeks, like seaweed on a clam.

Alas for those two loving ones! she waked not from her swound, 25  
 And he was taken with the cramp, and in the waves was drowned;  
 But Fate has metamorphosed them, in pity of their woe,  
 And now they keep an oyster-shop for mermaids down below.

41. *chariot*—light, four-wheeled “buggy.” 41. *barouche*—four-wheeled carriage with a seat in front for the driver, two double seats inside, and a folding top.

AFTER A LECTURE ON  
WORDSWORTH

Fear not,—one body makes it dip,  
But not a thousand souls.

In 1853 Holmes delivered some lectures on the English poets at the Lowell Institute in Boston. At the conclusion of the lecture on Wordsworth he read this poem. Under the title "A Vision of the Housatonic. Epilogue to a Lecture on Wordsworth" it was first printed in *The Knickerbocker Gallery* (1855), and reprinted in *The Atlantic Souvenir* (1859). Under its present title it appears as part of the "Vignettes" section of *Songs in Many Keys* (1862). The student will note that Holmes echoes many bits of Wordsworthian phraseology and cadence.

Come, spread your wings, as I spread mine.  
And leave the crowded hall  
For where the eyes of twilight shine  
O'er evening's western wall.

These are the pleasant Berkshire hills, 5  
Each with its leafy crown;  
Hark! from their sides a thousand rills  
Come singing sweetly down.

A thousand rills; they leap and shine,  
Strained through the shadowy nooks, 10  
Till, clasped in many a gathering twine,  
They swell a hundred brooks.

A hundred brooks, and still they run  
With ripple, shade, and gleam,  
Till clustering all their braids in one, 15  
They flow a single stream.

A bracelet spun from mountain mist,  
A silvery sash unwound,  
With ox-bow curve and sinuous twist  
It writhes to reach the Sound. 20

This is my bark,—a pygmy's ship;  
Beneath a child it rolls;

Float we the grassy banks between; 25  
Without an oar we glide;  
The meadows, drest in living green,  
Unroll on either side.

Come, take the book we love so well,  
And let us read and dream 30  
We see whate'er its pages tell,  
And sail an English stream.

Up to the clouds the lark has sprung,  
Still trilling as he flies;  
The linnet sings as there he sung; 35  
The unseen cuckoo cries,

And daisies strew the banks along,  
And yellow kingcups shine,  
With cowslips, and a primrose throng,  
And humble celandine. 40

Ah foolish dream! when Nature nursed  
Her daughter in the West,  
The fount was drained that opened first;  
She bared her other breast.

On the young planet's orient shore 45  
Her morning hand she tried;  
Then turned the broad medallion o'er  
And stamped the sunset side.

Take what she gives, her pine's tall stem,  
Her elm with hanging spray; 50  
She wears her mountain diadem  
Still in her own proud way.

Look on the forests' ancient kings,  
The hemlock's towering pride:  
Yon trunk had thrice a hundred rings, 55  
And fell before it died.

5. **Berkshire**—*Cf.* note 58, p. 652. 20. **Sound**—Long Island Sound. 29. **book**—Wordsworth's *Poems*. 33. **Up to the clouds**—The opening line of Wordsworth's "To a Sky-Lark" is "Up with me! up into the clouds!" 35. **linnet**—a bird to which Wordsworth addressed his poem "The Green Linnet." 36. **cuckoo**—*Cf.* Wordsworth's "To the Cuckoo"—"still longed for, never seen." 37. **daisies**—Wordsworth has four poems on the daisy. 39. **primrose**—There is a famous primrose in "Peter Bell"; and Wordsworth has also a poem "The Primrose of the Rock." 40. **celandine**—Wordsworth addressed three poems to the "small celandine."

Nor think that Nature saves her bloom  
And slights our grassy plain;  
For us she wears her court costume,—  
Look on its brodered train;

The lily with the sprinkled dots,  
Brands of the noontide beam;  
The cardinal, and the blood-red spots,  
Its double in the stream,

As if some wounded eagle's breast,  
Slow throbbing o'er the plain,  
Had left its airy path impressed  
In drops of scarlet rain.

And hark! and hark! the woodland rings;  
There thrilled the thrush's soul;  
And look! that flash of flamy wings,—  
The fire-plumed oriole!

Above, the hen-hawk swims and swoops,  
Flung from the bright, blue sky;  
Below, the robin hops, and whoops  
His piercing, Indian cry.

Beauty runs virgin in the woods  
Robed in her rustic green,  
And oft a longing thought intrudes,  
As if we might have seen

Her every finger's every joint  
Ringed with some golden line,  
Poet whom Nature did anoint!  
Had our wild home been thine.

Yet think not so; Old England's blood  
Runs warm in English veins;  
But wafted o'er the icy flood  
Its better life remains:

Our children know each wildwood smell,  
The bayberry and the fern,

The man who does not know them well  
Is all too old to learn.

60 Be patient! On the breathing page  
Still pants our hurried past;  
Pilgrim and soldier, saint and sage,— 95  
The poet comes the last!

Though still the lark-voiced matins ring  
The world has known so long;  
The wood-thrush of the West shall sing  
Earth's last sweet even-song! 100

### THE VOICELESS

One of the *Autocrat* poems, for the bibliographical history of which see "The Living Temple."

We count the broken lyres that rest  
Where the sweet wailing singers slumber,  
But o'er their silent sister's breast  
The wild-flowers who will stoop to number?

A few can touch the magic string, 5  
And noisy Fame is proud to win them:—  
Alas for those that never sing,  
But die with all their music in them!

80 Nay, grieve not for the dead alone  
Whose song has told their hearts' sad  
story,— 10

Weep for the voiceless, who have known  
The cross without the crown of glory!  
Not where Leucadian breezes sweep  
O'er Sappho's memory-haunted billow,  
But where the glistening night-dews weep 15  
On nameless sorrow's churchyard pillow.

O hearts that break and give no sign  
Save whitening lip and fading tresses,  
Till Death pours out his longed-for wine  
Slow-dropped from Misery's crushing  
presses,— 20

61. lily . . . dots—the tiger lily? 63. cardinal—The American cardinal bird or cardinal grosbeak is not known in Europe. 70. thrush—Holmes's catalogue is of American birds not native to Europe. 13. Leucadian—Sappho, the Greek poetess of the sixth century B.C., is supposed to have leaped into the sea from the Leucadian rock because of an unhappy love affair.

If singing breath or echoing chord  
 To every hidden pang were given,  
 What endless melodies were poured,  
 As sad as earth, as sweet as heaven!

## THE LIVING TEMPLE

This poem, also known as "The Anatomist's Hymn," formed part of the original *Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*, and was published with an installment of that work in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1858, and in the *Autocrat* in volume form. It was collected into *Songs in Many Keys* (1862); in the Household edition it formed part of "Songs in Many Keys, Part II, 1857-1861." It should be studied as reflecting Holmes's reverential attitude towards his chosen science. The anatomical references are obvious. The manner of the poem suggests the allegorical poems of the seventeenth century in England.

Not in the world of light alone,  
 Where God has built his blazing throne  
 Nor yet alone in earth below,  
 With belted seas that come and go,  
 And endless isles of sunlit green, 5  
 Is all thy Maker's glory seen:  
 Look in upon thy wondrous frame,—  
 Eternal wisdom still the same!

The smooth, soft air with pulse-like waves  
 Flows murmuring through its hidden 10  
 caves,  
 Whose streams of brightening purple rush,  
 Fired with a new and livelier blush,  
 While all their burden of decay  
 The ebbing current steals away,  
 And red with Nature's flame they start 15  
 From the warm fountains of the heart.

No rest that throbbing slave may ask,  
 Forever quivering o'er his task,  
 While far and wide a crimson jet  
 Leaps forth to fill the woven net 20  
 Which in unnumbered crossing tides  
 The flood of burning life divides,  
 Then, kindling each decaying part,  
 Creeps back to find the throbbing heart.

But warmed with that unchanging flame 25  
 Behold the outward moving frame,  
 Its living marbles jointed strong  
 With glistening band and silvery thong,  
 And linked to reason's guiding reins  
 By myriad rings in trembling chains, 30  
 Each graven with the threaded zone  
 Which claims it as the master's own.

See how yon beam of seeming white  
 Is braided out of seven-hued light,  
 Yet in those lucid globes no ray 35  
 By any chance shall break astray.  
 Hark how the rolling surge of sound,  
 Arches and spirals circling round,  
 Wakes the hushed spirit through thine ear  
 With music it is heaven to hear. 40

Then mark the cloven sphere that holds  
 All thought in its mysterious folds;  
 That feels sensation's faintest thrill,  
 And flashes forth the sovereign will;  
 Think on the stormy world that dwells 45  
 Locked in its dim and clustering cells!  
 The lightning gleams of power it sheds  
 Along its hollow glassy threads!

O Father! grant thy love divine  
 To make these mystic temples thine! 50  
 When wasting age and wearying strife  
 Have sapped the leaning walls of life,  
 When darkness gathers over all,  
 And the last tottering pillars fall,  
 Take the poor dust thy mercy warms, 55  
 And mould it into heavenly forms!

## THE BOYS

1859

From 1851 to 1889 Holmes furnished annually a poem for the reunion of the Harvard class of 1829, of which he was a member—the most remarkable series of

college poems ever written in the United States. "The Boys" was first published as part of *The Professor at the Breakfast-Table* in the *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1859, and in the *Professor* volume (1859). It was collected into *Songs and Poems of the Class of 1829* (1859) and into *Songs in Many Keys* (1862). The Riverside edition has the following note:

"The members of the Harvard College class of 1829 referred to in this poem are: 'Doctor,' Francis Thomas; 'Judge,' G. T. Bigelow, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts; 'Speaker,' Hon. Francis B. Crowninshield, Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives; 'Mr. Mayor,' G. W. Richardson, of Worcester, Mass.; 'Member of Congress,' Hon. George T. Davis; 'Reverend,' James Freeman Clarke; 'boy with the grave mathematical look,' Benjamin Peirce; 'boy with a three-decker brain,' Judge Benjamin R. Curtis, of the Supreme Court of the United States; 'nice youngster of excellent pith,' S. F. Smith, author of 'My Country, 'tis of Thee.'"

Has there any old fellow got mixed with the boys?  
If there has, take him out, without making a noise.  
Hang the Almanac's cheat and the Catalogue's spite!  
Old Time is a liar! We're twenty to-night!

We're twenty! We're twenty! Who says we are more? 5  
He's tipsy,—young jackanapes!—show him the door!  
"Gray temples at twenty?"—Yes! *white* if we please;  
Where the snow-flakes fall thickest there's nothing can freeze!

Was it snowing I spoke of? Excuse the mistake!  
Look close,—you will see not a sign of a flake! 10  
We want some new garlands for those we have shed,—  
And these are white roses in place of the red.

We've a trick, we young fellows, you may have been told,  
Of talking (in public) as if we were old:—  
That boy we call "Doctor," and this we call "Judge"; 15  
It's a neat little fiction,—of course it's all fudge.

That fellow's the "Speaker,"—the one on the right;  
"Mr. Mayor," my young one, how are you to-night?  
That's our "Member of Congress," we say when we chaff;  
There's the "Reverend" What's his name?—don't make me laugh. 20

That boy with the grave mathematical look  
Made believe he had written a wonderful book,  
And the ROYAL SOCIETY thought it was *true*!  
So they chose him right in; a good joke it was, too!

There's a boy, we pretend, with a three-decker brain, 25  
That could harness a team with a logical chain;  
When he spoke for our manhood in syllabled fire,  
We called him "The Justice," but now he's "The Squire."

And there's a nice youngster of excellent pith,—  
 Fate tried to conceal him by naming him Smith;  
 But he shouted a song for the brave and the free,—  
 Just read on his medal, "My country," "of thee!" 30

You hear that boy laughing?—You think he's all fun;  
 But the angels laugh, too, at the good he has done;  
 The children laugh loud as they troop to his call,  
 And the poor man that knows him laughs loudest of all! 35

Yes, we're boys,—always playing with tongue or with pen,—  
 And I sometimes have asked,—Shall we ever be men?  
 Shall we always be youthful, and laughing, and gay,  
 Till the last dear companion drops smiling away? 40

Then here's to our boyhood, its gold and its gray!  
 The stars of its winter, the dews of its May!  
 And when we have done with our life-lasting toys,  
 Dear Father, take care of thy children, THE BOYS!

#### BROTHER JONATHAN'S LAMENT FOR SISTER CAROLINE

Published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, May, 1861; republished in *Chimes of Freedom and Union* (1861); collected into *Songs in Many Keys* (1862). On December 20, 1860, a convention at Columbia, South Carolina, adopted a resolution declaring that "the union now subsisting between South Carolina and the other states" was dissolved. On April 12, 1861, the Confederate troops opened fire on Fort Sumter, in Charleston Harbor. However, Holmes dated his poem March 25, 1861.

She has gone,—she has left us in passion and pride,—  
 Our stormy-browed sister, so long at our side!  
 She has torn her own star from our firmament's glow,  
 And turned on her brother the face of a foe!

O Caroline, Caroline, child of the sun, 5  
 We can never forget that our hearts have been one,—  
 Our foreheads both sprinkled in Liberty's name,  
 From the fountain of blood with the finger of flame!

You were always too ready to fire at a touch;  
 But we said, "She is hasty,—she does not mean much." 10  
 We have scowled, when you uttered some turbulent threat;  
 But Friendship still whispered, "Forgive and forget!"

Has our love all died out? Have its altars grown cold?  
 Has the curse come at last which the fathers foretold?

33. boy laughing—the Rev. Samuel May, the abolitionist. 9. too ready—In 1832 a South Carolina convention had "nullified" the Tariff Acts of 1828 and 1832.



Then Nature must teach us the strength of the chain 15  
That her petulant children would sever in vain.

They may fight till the buzzards are gorged with their spoil,  
Till the harvest grows black as it rots in the soil,  
Till the wolves and the catamounts troop from their caves,  
And the shark tracks the pirate, the lord of the waves: 20

In vain is the strife! When its fury is past,  
Their fortunes must flow in one channel at last,  
As the torrents that rush from the mountains of snow  
Roll mingled in peace through the valleys below.

Our Union is river, lake, ocean, and sky: 25  
Man breaks not the medal, when God cuts the die!  
Though darkened with sulphur, though cloven with steel,  
The blue arch will brighten, the waters will heal!

O Caroline, Caroline, child of the sun,  
There are battles with Fate that can never be won! 30  
The star-flowering banner must never be furled,  
For its blossoms of light are the hope of the world!

Go, then, our rash sister! afar and aloof,  
Run wild in the sunshine away from our roof;  
But when your heart aches and your feet have grown sore, 35  
Remember the pathway that leads to our door!

### THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS

Again, part of the *Autocrat* papers, and first published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, 1858; collected into *Songs in Many Keys* (1862); and in the Household edition placed in the section of poems from the *Autocrat*. The chambered, or pearly, nautilus, native to the South Pacific and Indian oceans, is one of the cephalopods. The fancy connected with the nautilus is that it uses its membrane to serve as a sail.

This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,  
Sails the unshadowed main,—  
The venturous bark that flings  
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings  
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings, 5  
And coral reefs lie bare,  
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;  
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!  
And every chambered cell, 10  
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,  
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,  
Before thee lies revealed,—  
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil 15  
 That spread his lustrous coil;  
 Still, as the spiral grew,  
 He left the past year's dwelling for the new,  
 Stole with soft step its shining archway through,  
 Built up its idle door, 20  
 Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,  
 Child of the wandering sea,  
 Cast from her lap, forlorn!  
 From thy dead lips a clearer note is born 25  
 Than ever Triton blew from wreathèd horn!  
 While on mine ear it rings,  
 Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings:—

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,  
 As the swift seasons roll! 30  
 Leave thy low-vaulted past!  
 Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
 Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
 Till thou at length art free,  
 Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea! 35

## CONTENTMENT

"Man wants but little here below."

One of the *Autocrat* poems, following the bibliographical fortunes of the others. The motto is from Goldsmith, "The Hermit," stanza 8.

Little I ask; my wants are few;  
 I only wish a hut of stone,  
 (A *very plain* brown stone will do,) 5  
 That I may call my own;—  
 And close at hand is such a one,  
 In yonder street that fronts the sun.

Plain food is quite enough for me;  
 Three courses are as good as ten;—  
 If Nature can subsist on three,  
 Thank Heaven for three. Amen! 10

I always thought cold victual nice;—  
 My *choice* would be vanilla-ice.

I care not much for gold or land;—  
 Give me a mortgage here and there,—  
 Some good bank-stock, some note of hand,  
 Or trifling railroad share,— 16  
 I only ask that Fortune send  
 A *little* more than I shall spend.

Honors are silly toys, I know,  
 And titles are but empty names; 20  
 I would, *perhaps*, be Plenipo,—  
 But only near St. James;  
 I'm very sure I should not care  
 To fill our Gubernator's chair.

Jewels are baubles; 't is a sin 25  
 To care for such unfruitful things;—  
 One good-sized diamond in a pin,—  
 Some, *not so large*, in rings,—

26. *Triton*—Cf. Wordsworth: "hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn," the last line of the sonnet beginning "The world is too much with us; late and soon." Triton is one of the lesser sea gods. 3. *brown stone*—The "brown-stone front" was the fashionable mode of building among the rich when the poem was written. 21. *Plenipo*—minister plenipotentiary. The joke lies in the fact that the poet would merely like to be the most important minister in the diplomatic service, the one credited to England, the Court of St. James's. 24. *Gubernator*—Governor.

A ruby, and a pearl, or so,  
Will do for me;—I laugh at show. 30

My dame should dress in cheap attire;  
(Good, heavy silks are never dear;—  
I own perhaps I *might* desire  
Some shawls for true Cashmere,—  
Some marrowy crapes of China silk, 35  
Like wrinkled skins on scalded milk.

I would not have the horse I drive  
So fast that folks must stop and stare;  
An easy gait—two, forty-five—  
Suits me; I do not care;— 40  
Perhaps, for just a *single spurt*,  
Some seconds less would do no hurt.

Of pictures, I should like to own  
Titians and Raphaels three or four,—  
I love so much their style and tone,— 45  
One Turner, and no more,  
(A landscape,—foreground golden dirt,—  
The sunshine painted with a squirt.)

Of books but few,—some fifty score  
For daily use, and bound for wear; 50  
The rest upon an upper floor;—  
Some *little* luxury *there*  
Of red morocco's gilded gleam,  
And vellum rich as country cream.

Busts, cameos, gems,—such things as these,  
Which others often show for pride, 56  
I value for their power to please,  
And selfish churls deride;—  
One Stradivarius, I confess,  
Two Meerschauts, I would fain possess. 60

Wealth's wasteful tricks I will not learn  
Nor ape the glittering upstart fool;—

Shall not carved tables serve my turn,  
But *all* must be of buhl?  
Give grasping pomp its double share,— 65  
I ask but *one* recumbent chair.

Thus humble let me live and die,  
Nor long for Midas' golden touch;  
If Heaven more generous gifts deny,  
I shall not miss them *much*,— 70  
Too grateful for the blessing lent  
Of simple tastes and mind content!

### THE DEACON'S MASTER-PIECE

OR, THE WONDERFUL "ONE-HOSS SHAY"  
A LOGICAL STORY

An *Autocrat* poem. The satire on Calvinism should be compared with Holmes's essay on Jonathan Edwards.

Have you heard of the wonderful one-hoss shay,  
That was built in such a logical way  
It ran a hundred years to a day,  
And then, of a sudden, it—ah, but stay,  
I'll tell you what happened without delay, 5  
Scaring the parson into fits,  
Frightening people out of their wits,—  
Have you ever heard of that, I say?

Seventeen hundred and fifty-five.  
*Georgius Secundus* was then alive,— 10  
Snuffy old drone from the German hive.  
That was the year when Lisbon-town  
Saw the earth open and gulp her down,  
And Braddock's army was done so brown,  
Left without a scalp to its crown. 15  
It was on the terrible Earthquake-day  
That the Deacon finished the one-hoss shay.

39. two, forty-five—that is, a fast horse. 44. Titians—Tiziano Vecellio (1477-1576), great Venetian painter. 44. Raphaels—Raffaello Sanzio (1483-1520), Italian painter. 46. Turner—J. M. W. Turner (1775-1851), English landscape painter celebrated by Ruskin. 59. Stradivarius—The violins manufactured by Antonio Stradivari of Cremona (1644-1737) are priceless. 60. Meerschauts—Genuine meerschaut pipes were, and are, expensive. 64. buhl—cabinetwork inlaid with tortoise shell, metal, and so on. 68. Midas—who, in Greek mythology, as a punishment for his greed, was compelled to turn into gold everything he touched, including his child. 10. Georgius Secundus—George II, born in Hanover, and King of England 1727-60. 12. Lisbon-town—The terrible Lisbon earthquake of 1755 furnished a moot point in theology, seeming to deny the goodness of God. 14. Braddock's—General Edward Braddock (1695-1755), defeated and killed by the French and Indians.

Now in building of chaises, I tell you what,  
 There is always *somewhere* a weakest spot,—  
 In hug, tire, felloe, in spring or thill, 20  
 In panel, or crossbar, or floor, or sill,  
 In screw, bolt, thoroughbrace,—lurking still,  
 Find it somewhere you must and will,—  
 Above or below, or within or without,—  
 And that's the reason, beyond a doubt, 25  
 That a chaise *breaks down*, but doesn't wear  
*out*.

But the Deacon swore, (as Deacons do,  
 With an "I dew vum," or an "I tell *yeou*,")  
 He would build one shay to beat the taown  
 'n' the keounty 'n' all the kentry raoun'; 30  
 It should be so built that it *couldn't* break  
 daown:

"Fur," said the Deacon, "'t's mighty plain  
 Thut the weakes' place mus' stan' the strain;  
 'n' the way t' fix it, uz I maintain,  
 Is only jest

T' make that place uz strong uz the rest." 35

So the Deacon inquired of the village folk  
 Where he could find the strongest oak,  
 That could n't be split nor bent nor broke,—  
 That was for spokes and floor and sills;  
 He sent for lancewood to make the thills; 40  
 The crossbars were ash, from the straightest  
 trees,

The panels of white-wood, that cuts like  
 cheese,  
 But lasts like iron for things like these;

The hubs of logs from the "Settler's ellum,"—  
 Last of its timber,—they couldn't sell 'em, 45  
 Never an axe had seen their chips,  
 And the wedges flew from between their lips,  
 Their blunt ends frizzled like celery-tips;  
 Step and prop-iron, bolt and screw,  
 Spring, tire, axle, and linchpin too, 50  
 Steel of the finest, bright and blue;  
 Thoroughbrace bison-skin, thick and wide;  
 Boot, top, dasher, from tough old hide  
 Found in the pit when the tanner died,  
 That was the way he "put her through." 55  
 "There!" said the Deacon, "naow she'll dew!"

Do! I tell you, I rather guess  
 She was a wonder, and nothing less!  
 Colts grew horses, beards turned gray,  
 Deacon and deaconess dropped away, 60  
 Children and grandchildren—where were  
 they?  
 But there stood the stout old one-hoss shay  
 As fresh as on Lisbon-earthquake-day!

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED;—it came and found  
 The Deacon's masterpiece strong and sound.  
 Eighteen hundred increased by ten;— 65  
 "Hahnsum kerridge" they called it then.  
 Eighteen hundred and twenty came;—  
 Running as usual; much the same.  
 Thirty and forty at last arrive, 70  
 And then come fifty, and FIFTY-FIVE.

Little of all we value here  
 Wakes on the morn of its hundredth year  
 Without both feeling and looking queer.  
 In fact, there's nothing that keeps its youth,  
 So far as I know, but a tree and truth. 76  
 (This is a moral that runs at large;  
 Take it.—You're welcome.—No extra charge.)

FIRST OF NOVEMBER,—the Earthquake-day,—  
 There are traces of age in the one-hoss shay,  
 A general flavor of mild decay, 81  
 But nothing local, as one may say.  
 There couldn't be,—for the Deacon's art  
 Had made it so like in every part  
 That there wasn't a chance for one to start. 85  
 For the wheels were just as strong as the  
 thills,

And the floor was just as strong as the sills,  
 And the panels just as strong as the floor,  
 And the whipple-tree neither less nor more,  
 And the back-crossbar as strong as the fore,  
 And spring and axle and hub *encore*. 91  
 And yet, *as a whole*, it is past a doubt  
 In another hour it will be *worn out*!

First of November, 'Fifty-five!  
 This morning the parson takes a drive. 95  
 Now, small boys, get out of the way!  
 Here comes the wonderful one-hoss shay,  
 Drawn by a rat-tailed, ewe-necked bay.

18. *chaises*—Note that the French form "chaise" comes to be pronounced "shay." 20. *felloe*—the exterior wooden rim of the wheel. 20. *thill*—one of the two shafts by which a horse is hitched to a vehicle. 22. *thoroughbrace*—leather strap supporting the body of a carriage. 50. *linchpin*—a pin inserted in the end of the axletree to hold the wheel.

"Huddup!" said the parson.—Off went they.  
The parson was working his Sunday's  
text,—

100

Had got to *fifthly*, and stopped perplexed  
At what the—Moses—was coming next.

All at once the horse stood still,  
Close by the meet'n'-house on the hill.

First a shiver, and then a thrill,

105

Then something decidedly like a spill,—

And the parson was sitting upon a rock,

At half past nine by the meet'n'-house clock,—

Just the hour of the Earthquake shock!

What do you think the parson found,

110

When he got up and stared around?

The poor old chaise in a heap or mound,

As if it had been to the mill and ground!

You see, of course, if you're not a dunce,

How it went to pieces all at once,—

115

All at once, and nothing first,—

Just as bubbles do when they burst.

End of the wonderful one-hoss shay.

Logic is logic. That's all I say.

## DOROTHY Q.

### A FAMILY PORTRAIT

Published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, January, 1871, and collected into *Songs of Many Seasons* (1875) as part of the "In the Quiet Days" section. In the Riverside edition Holmes prefaces the poem by the following note:

"I cannot tell the story of Dorothy Q. more simply in prose than I have told it in verse, but I can add something to it.

"Dorothy was the daughter of Judge Edmund Quincy, and the niece of Josiah Quincy, junior, the young patriot and orator who died just before the American Revolution, of which he was one of the most eloquent and effective promoters. The son of the latter, Josiah Quincy, the first mayor of Boston bearing that name, lived to a great age, one of the most useful and honored citizens of his time.

"The canvas of the painting was so much decayed that it had to be replaced by a new one, in doing which the rapier thrust was of course filled up."

Grandmother's mother: her age, I guess,  
Thirteen summers, or something less;  
Girlish bust, but womanly air;  
Smooth, square forehead with uprolled hair;  
Lips that lover has never kissed;  
Taper fingers and slender wrist;  
Hanging sleeves of stiff brocade;  
So they painted the little maid.

5

On her hand a parrot green  
Sits unmoving and broods serene.  
Hold up the canvas full in view,—  
Look! there's a rent the light shines through,  
Dark with a century's fringe of dust,—  
That was a Red-Coat's rapier-thrust!  
Such is the tale the lady old,  
Dorothy's daughter's daughter, told.

10

15

Who the painter was none may tell,—  
One whose best was not over well;  
Hard and dry, it must be confessed,  
Flat as a rose that has long been pressed;  
Yet in her cheek the hues are bright,  
Dainty colors of red and white,  
And in her slender shape are seen  
Hint and promise of stately mien.

20

Look not on her with eyes of scorn,—  
Dorothy Q. was a lady born!  
Ay! since the galloping Normans came,  
England's annals have known her name;  
And still to the three-hilled rebel town  
Dear is that ancient name's renown,  
For many a civic wreath they won,  
The youthful sire and the gray-haired son.

25

30

O Damsel Dorothy! Dorothy Q!  
Strange is the gift that I owe to you;  
Such a gift as never a king  
Save to daughter or son might bring,—  
All my tenure of heart and hand,  
All my title to house and land;  
Mother and sister and child and wife  
And joy and sorrow and death and life!

35

40

27. Normans—Quincy is a Norman French name, brought into England at the time of the Norman Conquest (1066). 29. three-hilled . . . town—Boston was once known as Tremont, because of the three hills on which it was built.

What if a hundred years ago  
 Those close-shut lips had answered No,  
 When forth the tremulous question came  
 That cost the maiden her Norman name,  
 And under the folds that look so still 45  
 The bodice swelled with the bosom's thrill?  
 Should I be I, or would it be  
 One tenth another, to nine tenths me?

Soft is the breath of a maiden's YES:  
 Not the light gossamer stirs with less; 50  
 But never a cable that holds so fast  
 Through all the battles of wave and blast,  
 And never an echo of speech or song  
 That lives in the babbling air so long!  
 There were tones in the voice that whispered  
 then 55  
 You may hear to-day in a hundred men.

O lady and lover, how faint and far  
 Your images hover,—and here we are,  
 Solid and stirring in flesh and bone,—  
 Edward's and Dorothy's—all their own,— 60  
 A goodly record for Time to show  
 Of a syllable spoken so long ago!—  
 Shall I bless you, Dorothy, or forgive  
 For the tender whisper that bade me live?

It shall be a blessing, my little maid! 65  
 I will heal the stab of the Red-Coat's blade,  
 And freshen the gold of the tarnished frame,  
 And gild with a rhyme your household name;  
 So you shall smile on us brave and bright  
 As first you greeted the morning's light, 70  
 And live untroubled by woes and fears  
 Through a second youth of a hundred years.

### AT THE PANTOMIME

First published in *Songs of Many Seasons* (1875), though Holmes appends the cryptic note: "18—. Rewritten 1874," indicating that the germ of the poem is earlier. The last four verses formed part of an installment of *Over*

*the Teacups* in the *Atlantic Monthly* for July, 1890. It forms part of the "In the Quiet Days" section of the 1875 volume.

The house was crammed from roof to floor,  
 Heads piled on heads at every door;  
 Half dead with August's seething heat  
 I crowded on and found my seat,  
 My patience slightly out of joint, 5  
 My temper short of boiling-point,  
 Not quite at *Hate mankind as such*,  
 Nor yet at *Love them overmuch*.

Amidst the throng the pageant drew  
 Were gathered Hebrews not a few, 10  
 Black-bearded, swarthy,—at their side  
 Dark, jewelled women, orient-eyed:  
 If scarce a Christian hopes for grace  
 Who crowds one in his narrow place,  
 What will the savage victim do 15  
 Whose ribs are kneaded by a Jew?

Next on my left a breathing form  
 Wedged up against me, close and warm;  
 The beak that crowned the bistrèd face  
 Betrayed the mould of Abraham's race,— 20  
 That coal-black hair, that smoke-brown hue,—  
 Ah, cursèd, unbelieving Jew!  
 I started, shuddering, to the right,  
 And squeezed—a second Israelite!

Then woke the evil brood of rage 25  
 That slumber, tongueless, in their cage;  
 I stabbed in turn with silent oaths  
 The hook-nosed kite of carrion clothes,  
 The snaky usurer, him that crawls  
 And cheats beneath the golden balls, 30  
 Moses and Levi, all the horde,  
 Spawn of the race that slew its Lord.

Up came their murderous deeds of old,  
 The grisly story Chaucer told,  
 And many an ugly tale beside 35  
 Of children caught and crucified;  
 I heard the ducat-sweating thieves

19. *bistrèd*—Bistre is a dark brown pigment. 28. *carrion clothes*—"Ol' clothes man" was a slang term for the Jew much bandied about in the nineteenth century. 34. *Chaucer*—the story of Hugh of Lincoln. 36. *children caught and crucified*—The legend of the "ritual murder" of Gentile children by the Jews is an ancient and baseless slander. 37. *ducat-sweating*—a reminiscence of Shylock's lament as reported by Salanio, *Merchant of Venice*, Act II, scene 8.

<p>Beneath the Ghetto's slouching eaves,          And, thrust beyond the tented green,          The lepers cry, "Unclean! Unclean!"</p> <p>The show went on, but, ill at ease,          My sullen eye it could not please.          In vain my conscience whispered, "Shame!          Who but their Maker is to blame?"          I thought of Judas and his bribe,          And steeled my soul against their tribe:          My neighbors stirred; I looked again          Full on the younger of the twain.</p> <p>A fresh young cheek whose olive hue          The mantling blood shows faintly through;          Locks dark as midnight, that divide          And shade the neck on either side;          Soft, gentle, loving eyes that gleam          Clear as a starlit mountain stream;—          So looked that other child of Shem,          The Maiden's Boy of Bethlehem!</p> <p>And thou couldst scorn the peerless blood          That flows unmingled from the Flood,—</p>	<p>40</p> <p>45</p> <p>51</p> <p>55</p>	<p>Thy scutcheon spotted with the stains          Of Norman thieves and pirate Danes! 60          The New World's foundling, in thy pride          Scowl on the Hebrew at thy side,          And lo! the very semblance there          The Lord of Glory deigned to wear!</p> <p>I see that radiant image rise, 65          The flowing hair, the pitying eyes,          The faintly crimsoned cheek that shows          The blush of Sharon's opening rose,—          Thy hands would clasp his hallowed feet          Whose brethren soil thy Christian seat, 70          Thy lips would press his garment's hem          That curl in wrathful scorn for them!</p> <p>A sudden mist, a watery screen,          Dropped like a veil before the scene;          The shadow floated from my soul, 75          And to my lips a whisper stole,—          "Thy prophets caught the Spirit's flame,          From thee the Son of Mary came,          With thee the Father deigned to dwell,—          Peace be upon thee, Israel!" 80</p>
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### NEARING THE SNOW-LINE

First published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, January, 1870, and collected into *Songs of Many Seasons* (1875), where it forms the terminal poem of the section "In the Quiet Days."

<p>Slow toiling upward from the misty vale,          I leave the bright enamelled zones below;          No more for me their beauteous bloom shall glow,          Their lingering sweetness load the morning gale;          Few are the slender flowerets, scentless, pale,          That on their ice-clad stems all trembling blow          Along the margin of unmelting snow;          Yet with unsaddened voice thy verge I hail,          White realm of peace above the flowering line;          Welcome thy frozen domes, thy rocky spires!          O'er thee undimmed the moon-girt planets shine,          On thy majestic altars fade the fires          That filled the air with smoke of vain desires,          And all the unclouded blue of heaven is thine!</p>	<p>5</p> <p>10</p>
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40. Unclean—Cf. Lev. 13:45. 45. Judas . . . bribe—Cf. Mark 26:15. 55. Shem—Cf. Gen. 10:21-32. 60. Norman thieves and pirate Danes—The Norse (Norman) vikings and the Danes who founded kingdoms in England were, to all intents, pirates. 68. Sharon's . . . rose—Cf. Song of Sol. 2:1. 2. enamelled zones—belts of verdure studded with flowers.

## AT MY FIRESIDE

This is the prelude to the volume *Before the Curfew* (1888).

Alone, beneath the darkened sky,  
 With saddened heart and unstrung lyre,  
 I heap the spoils of years gone by,  
 And leave them with a long-drawn sigh,  
 Like drift-wood brands that glimmering lie, 5  
 Before the ashes hide the fire.

Let not these slow declining days  
 The rosy light of dawn outlast;  
 Still round my lonely hearth it plays,  
 And gilds the east with borrowed rays, 10  
 While memory's mirrored sunset blaze  
 Flames on the windows of the past.

March 1, 1888.

## AFTER THE CURFEW

1889

This is the last of Holmes's poems for the class of 1829, and was published in a volume entitled *Latest Poems of the Class of 1829* (1890). It also served as one of the *Over the Teacups* poems in the *Atlantic Monthly*, and in the volume of that name. It was collected into the Riverside edition in 1891 as the last poem in the section "Poems of the Class of '29."

The play is over. While the light  
 Yet lingers in the darkening hall,  
 I come to say a last Good-night  
 Before the final *Exeunt all*.

We come with feeble steps and slow.  
 A little band of four or five, 10  
 Left from the wrecks of long ago,  
 Still pleased to find ourselves alive.

Alive! How living, too, are they  
 Whose memories it is ours to share!  
 Spread the long table's full array,— 15  
 There sits a ghost in every chair!

One breathing form no more, alas!  
 Amid our slender group we see;  
 With him we still remained "The Class,"—  
 Without his presence what are we? 20

The hand we ever loved to clasp,—  
 That tireless hand which knew no rest,—  
 Loosed from affection's clinging grasp,  
 Lies nerveless on the peaceful breast.

We gathered once, a joyous throng: 5  
 The jovial toasts went gayly round;  
 With jest, and laugh, and shout, and song,  
 We made the floors and walls resound.  
 The beaming eye, the cheering voice, 25  
 That lent to life a generous glow,  
 Whose every meaning said "Rejoice,"  
 We see, we hear, no more below.



The air seems darkened by his loss,  
 Earth's shadowed features look less fair,  
 And heavier weighs the daily cross 31  
 His willing shoulders helped us bear.

Why mourn that we the favored few  
 Whom grasping Time so long has spared  
 Life's sweet illusions to pursue, 35  
 The common lot of age have shared?

In every pulse of Friendship's heart  
 There breeds unfelt a throb of pain,—  
 One hour must rend its links apart,  
 Though years on years have forged the 40  
 chain.

So ends "The Boys,"—a lifelong play.  
 We too must hear the Prompter call  
 To fairer scenes and brighter day:  
 Farewell! I let the curtain fall.

### INVITÂ MINERVÂ

One of the *Over the Teacups* poems, gathered into the Riverside edition. The title means "The Unwilling Minerva"; that is,

to be without ability (inspiration); and the phrase is used in this meaning by Cicero.

Vex not the Muse with idle prayers—  
 She will not hear thy call;  
 She steals upon thee unawares,  
 Or seeks thee not at all.

Soft as the moonbeams when they sought 5  
 Endymion's fragrant bower,  
 She parts the whispering leaves of thought  
 To show her full-blown flower.

For thee her wooing hour has passed,  
 The singing birds have flown, 10  
 And winter comes with icy blast  
 To chill thy buds unblown.

Yet, though the woods no longer thrill  
 As once their arches rung,  
 Sweet echoes hover round thee still 15  
 Of songs thy summer sung.

Live in thy past; await no more  
 The rush of heaven-sent wings;  
 Earth still has music left in store  
 While Memory sighs and sings. 20

### THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE

First published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, November, 1857, as the first installment of the series. The text is that of the first edition in book form (1858), and comprises Chapter I of *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*.

#### I

**I** WAS just going to say, when I was interrupted, that one of the many ways of classifying minds is under the heads of arithmetical and algebraical intellects. All economical and practical wisdom is an extension or variation of the following arithmetical formula:  $2 + 2 = 4$ . Every philosophical proposition has the more general character of the expression  $a + b = c$ . We are mere

6. **Endymion**—in Greek legend the beautiful boy beloved by Artemis. **I. interrupted**—Holmes had contributed some earlier and inferior essays under this title to the *New England Magazine* in 1831-32.

operatives, empirics, and egotists, until we learn to think in letters instead of figures.

They all stared. There is a divinity student lately come among us to whom I commonly address remarks like the above, allowing him to take a certain share in the conversation, so far as assent or pertinent questions are involved. He abused his liberty on this occasion by presuming to say that Leibnitz had the same observation.—No, sir, I replied, he has not. But he said a mighty good thing about mathematics, that sounds something like it, and you found it, *not in the original*, but quoted by Dr. Thomas Reid. I will tell the company what he did say, one of these days.

—If I belong to a Society of Mutual Admiration?—I blush to say that I do not at this present moment. I once did, however. It was the first association to which I ever heard the term applied; a body of scientific young men in a great foreign city who admired their teacher, and to some extent each other. Many of them deserved it; they have become famous since. It amuses me to hear the talk of one of those beings described by Thackeray—

“Letters four do form his name”—

about a social development which belongs to the very noblest stage of civilization. All generous companies of artists, authors, philanthropists, men of science, are, or ought to be, Societies of Mutual Admiration. A man of genius, or any kind of superiority, is not debarred from admiring the same quality in another, nor the other from returning his admiration. They may even associate together and continue to think highly of each other. And so of a dozen such men, if any one place is fortunate enough to hold so many. The being referred to above assumes several false premises. First, that men of talent necessarily hate each other. Secondly, that intimate knowledge or habitual association destroys our admiration of persons whom we esteemed highly at a distance. Thirdly, that a circle of clever fellows, who meet together to dine and have a good time, have signed a constitutional compact to glorify themselves and to put down him and the fraction of the human race not belonging to their number. Fourthly, that it is an outrage that he is not asked to join them.

6. Leibnitz—See note 14, p. 407. 9. Reid—Thomas Reid (1710-1796), leader of the Scotch “common-sense” group of philosophers. 14. city—“The ‘body of scientific young men in a great foreign city’ was the Société d’Observation Médicale, of Paris, of which M. Louis was president, and MM. Barth, Grisotte, and our own Dr. Bowditch were members. They agreed in admiring their justly-honored president, and thought highly of some of their associates, who have since made good their promise of distinction.

“About the time when these papers were published, the Saturday Club was founded, or, rather, found itself in existence, without any organization, almost without parentage. It was natural enough that such men as Emerson, Longfellow, Agassiz, Peirce, with Hawthorne, Motley, Sumner, when within reach and others who would be good company for them, should meet and dine together once in a while, as they did, in point of fact, every month, and as some who are still living, with other and newer members, still meet and dine. If some of them had not admired each other they would have been exceptions in the world of letters and science. The club deserves being remembered for having no constitution or by-laws, for making no speeches, coming and going at will without remark, and acting out, though it did not proclaim the motto, ‘Shall I not take mine ease in mine inn?’ There was and is nothing of the Bohemian element about this club, but it has had many good times and not a little good talking.” (Holmes’s note, 1883) 16. Thackeray—William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863). Only truthful persons can interpret the line of quoted verse.

Here the company laughed a good deal, and the old gentleman who sits opposite said: "That's it! that's it!"

I continued, for I was in the talking vein. As to clever people's hating each other, I think *a little* extra talent does sometimes make people jealous. They  
 5 become irritated by perpetual attempts and failures, and it hurts their tempers and dispositions. Unpretending mediocrity is good, and genius is glorious; but a weak flavor of genius in an essentially common person is detestable. It spoils the grand neutrality of a commonplace character, as the rinsings of an un-  
 10 washed wineglass spoil a draught of fair water. No wonder the poor fellow we spoke of, who always belongs to this class of slightly flavored mediocrities, is puzzled and vexed by the strange sight of a dozen men of capacity working and playing together in harmony. He and his fellows are always fighting. With them familiarity naturally breeds contempt. If they ever praise each other's bad drawings, or broken-winded novels, or spavined verses, nobody  
 15 ever supposed it was from admiration; it was simply a contract between themselves and a publisher or dealer.

If the Mutuals have really nothing among them worth admiring, that alters the question. But if they are men with noble powers and qualities, let me tell you that, next to youthful love and family affections, there is no human senti-  
 20 ment better than that which unites the Societies of Mutual Admiration. And what would literature or art be without such associations? Who can tell what we owe to the Mutual Admiration Society of which Shakspeare, and Ben Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher were members? Or to that of which Addison and Steele formed the centre, and which gave us the Spectator? Or to that  
 25 where Johnson, and Goldsmith, and Burke, and Reynolds, and Beauclerk, and Boswell, most admiring among all admirers, met together? Was there any great harm in the fact that the Irvings and Paulding wrote in company? or any unpardonable cabal in the literary union of Verplanck and Bryant and Sands, and as many more as they chose to associate with them?

30 The poor creature does not know what he is talking about when he abuses this noblest of institutions. Let him inspect its mysteries through the knot-hole he has secured, but not use that orifice as a medium for his popgun. Such a society is the crown of a literary metropolis; if a town has not material for it, and spirit and good feeling enough to organize it, it is a mere caravansary,  
 35 fit for a man of genius to lodge in, but not to live in. Foolish people hate and dread and envy such an associaton of men of varied powers and influence, because it is lofty, serene, impregnable, and, by the necessity of the case, exclusive. Wise ones are prouder of the title M.S.M.A. than of all their other honors put together.

40 —All generous minds have a horror of what are commonly called "facts." They are the brute beasts of the intellectual domain. Who does not know fel-

22. *Society*—the gatherings at the Mermaid Tavern, celebrated by many poets. 23-24. *Addison and Steele*—the group which Pope satirized in his portrait of Atticus, wherein Addison "gave his little Senate laws." 25. *Johnson*—known simply as The Club, and celebrated in Boswell's *Johnson* and Goldsmith's *Retaliatio*n. 27. *Irvings and Paulding*—The *Salmagundi Papers* were written in collaboration by Washington Irving, Pierre Irving, and James K. Paulding. 28. *literary union*—Gulian Verplanck, William Cullen Bryant, and Robert C. Sands edited *The Talisman* (1827-29) in collaboration. 34. *caravansary*—inn.

flows that always have an ill-conditioned fact or two which they lead after them into decent company like so many bull-dogs, ready to let them slip at every ingenious suggestion, or convenient generalization, or pleasant fancy? I allow no "facts" at this table. What! Because bread is good and wholesome and necessary and nourishing, shall you thrust a crumb into my windpipe while I am talking? Do not these muscles of mine represent a hundred loaves of bread? and is not my thought the abstract of ten thousand of these crumbs of truth with which you would choke off my speech? 5

[The above remark must be conditioned and qualified for the vulgar mind. The reader will of course understand the precise amount of seasoning which must be added to it before he adopts it as one of the axioms of his life. The speaker disclaims all responsibility for its abuse in incompetent hands.] 10

This business of conversation is a very serious matter. There are men that it weakens one to talk with an hour more than a day's fasting would do. Mark this which I am going to say, for it is as good as a working professional man's advice, and costs you nothing: It is better to lose a pint of blood from your veins than to have a nerve tapped. Nobody measures your nervous force as it runs away, nor bandages your brain and marrow after the operation. 15

There are men of *esprit* who are excessively exhausting to some people. They are the talkers who have what may be called *jerky* minds. Their thoughts do not run in the natural order of sequence. They say bright things on all possible subjects, but their zigzags rack you to death. After a jolting half-hour with one of these jerky companions, talking with a dull friend affords great relief. It is like taking the cat in your lap after holding a squirrel. 20

What a comfort a dull but kindly person is, to be sure, at times! A ground-glass shade over a gas-lamp does not bring more solace to our dazzled eyes than such a one to our minds. 25

"Do not dull people bore you?" said one of the lady-boarders,—the same that sent me her autograph-book last week with a request for a few original stanzas, not remembering that "The Pactolian" pays me five dollars a line for every thing I write in its columns. 30

"Madam," said I, (she and the century were in their teens together,) "all men are bores, except when we want them. There never was but one man whom I would trust with my latch-key." 35

"Who might that favored person be?"

"Zimmermann."

—The men of genius that I fancy most have erectile heads like the cobra-di-capello. You remember what they tell of William Pinkney, the great pleader; how in his eloquent paroxysms the veins of his neck would swell and his face flush and his eyes glitter, until he seemed on the verge of apoplexy. The hydraulic arrangements for supplying the brain with blood are only second in importance to its own organization. The bulbous-headed fellows that steam 40

19. *esprit*—wit. 36. *Zimmermann*—"The *Treatise on Solitude*" is not so frequently seen lying about on library tables as in our younger days. I remember that I always respected the title and let the book alone." (Holmes's note, 1883) The reference is to a once popular book of religious musings by Johann Georg von Zimmermann (1728-1795). 37. *cobra-di-capello*—the hooded cobra, which raises its head and expands its hood when aroused. Holmes was full of snake lore. 38. *Pinkney*—William Pinkney (1764-1822), lawyer and orator.

well when they are at work are the men that draw big audiences and give us marrowy books and pictures. It is a good sign to have one's feet grow cold when he is writing. A great writer and speaker once told me that he often wrote with his feet in hot water; but for this, *all* his blood would have run  
 5 into his head, as the mercury sometimes withdraws into the ball of a thermometer.

—You don't suppose that my remarks made at this table are like so many postage-stamps, do you,—each to be only once uttered? If you do, you are mistaken. He must be a poor creature who does not often repeat himself.

10 Imagine the author of the excellent piece of advice, "Know thyself," never alluding to that sentiment again during the course of a protracted existence! Why, the truths a man carries about with him are his tools; and do you think a carpenter is bound to use the same plane but once to smooth a knotty board with, or to hang up his hammer after it has driven its first nail? I shall never  
 15 repeat a conversation, but an idea often. I shall use the same types when I like, but not commonly the same stereotypes. A thought is often original, though you have uttered it a hundred times. It has come to you over a new route, by a new and express train of associations.

Sometimes, but rarely, one may be caught making the same speech twice  
 20 over, and yet be held blameless. Thus, a certain lecturer, after performing in an inland city, where dwells a *Littératrice* of note, was invited to meet her and others over the social teacup. She pleasantly referred to his many wanderings in his new occupation. "Yes," he replied, "I am like the Huma, the bird that never lights, being always in the cars, as he is always on the wing."—Years  
 25 elapsed. The lecturer visited the same place once more for the same purpose. Another social cup after the lecture, and a second meeting with the distinguished lady. "You are constantly going from place to place," she said.—"Yes," he answered, "I am like the Huma,"—and finished the sentence as before.

30 What horrors, when it flashed over him that he had made this fine speech, word for word, twice over! Yet it was not true, as the lady might perhaps have fairly inferred, that he had embellished his conversation with the Huma daily during that whole interval of years. On the contrary, he had never once thought of the odious fowl until the recurrence of precisely the same circum-  
 35 stances brought up precisely the same idea. He ought to have been proud of the accuracy of his mental adjustments. Given certain factors, and a sound brain should always evolve the same fixed product with the certainty of Babbage's calculating machine.

—What a satire, by the way, is that machine on the mere mathematician! A

10. **author**—The phrase is attributed to Solon (639?-559 B.C.), among others. 16. **stereotypes**—the matrices, formed from individual types, of printing surfaces, formerly used in stereo-type printing. 21. **Littératrice**—literary woman. 23. **Huma**—"It was an agreeable incident of two consecutive visits to Hartford, Conn., that I met there the late Mrs. Sigourney. The second meeting recalled the first, and with it the allusion to the Huma, which bird is the subject of a short poem by another New England authoress, which may be found in Mr. Griswold's collection." (Holmes's note, 1883) The Huma appears in Moore's *Lalla Rookh*, the prose passage preceding "Paradise and the Peri." 37. **Babbage**—Charles Babbage (1792-1871), mathematician and inventor, who long worked at a calculating machine without ever completing it.

Frankenstein-monster, a thing without brains and without heart, too stupid to make a blunder; which turns out results like a corn-sheller, and never grows any wiser or better, though it grind a thousand bushels of them!

I have an immense respect for a man of talents *plus* "the mathematics." But the calculating power alone should seem to be the least human of qualities, and to have the smallest amount of reason in it; since a machine can be made to do the work of three or four calculators, and better than any one of them. Sometimes I have been troubled that I had not a deeper intuitive apprehension of the relations of numbers. But the triumph of the ciphering hand-organ has consoled me. I always fancy I can hear the wheels clicking in a calculator's brain. The power of dealing with numbers is a kind of "detached lever" arrangement, which may be put into a mighty poor watch. I suppose it is about as common as the power of moving the ears voluntarily, which is a moderately rare endowment.

—Little localized powers, and little narrow streaks of specialized knowledge, are things men are very apt to be conceited about. Nature is very wise; but for this encouraging principle how many small talents and little accomplishments would be neglected! Talk about conceit as much as you like, it is to human character what salt is to the ocean; it keeps it sweet, and renders it enduring. Say rather it is like the natural unguent of the sea-fowl's plumage, which enables him to shed the rain that falls on him and the wave in which he dips. When one has had *all* his conceit taken out of him, when he has lost *all* his illusions, his feathers will soon soak through, and he will fly no more.

"So you admire conceited people, do you?" said the young lady who has come to the city to be finished off for—the duties of life.

I am afraid you do not study logic at your school, my dear. It does not follow that I wish to be pickled in brine because I like a salt-water plunge at Nahant. I say that conceit is just as natural a thing to human minds as a centre is to a circle. But little-minded people's thoughts move in such small circles that five minutes' conversation gives you an arc long enough to determine their whole curve. An arc in the movement of a large intellect does not sensibly differ from a straight line. Even if it have the third vowel as its centre, it does not soon betray it. The highest thought, that is, is the most seemingly impersonal; it does not obviously imply any individual centre.

Audacious self-esteem, with good ground for it, is always imposing. What resplendent beauty that must have been which could have authorized Phryne to "peel" in the way she did! What fine speeches are those two: "*Non omnis moriar*," and "I have taken all knowledge to be my province"! Even in common people, conceit has the virtue of making them cheerful; the man who thinks his wife, his baby, his house, his horse, his dog, and himself severally

1. **Frankenstein-monster**—In the novel *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley (1797-1851), the medical student Frankenstein creates a monster from the remains of the dissecting-room, gives it life, but cannot give it a soul. 28. **Nahant**—a seaside resort near Boston. 36. **Phryne**—Phryne, the most beautiful of Athenian courtesans, being accused of murder, bared her breasts to the jury and was acquitted. 37-38. "*Non . . . moriar*"—"I shall not wholly die"; that is, "My works shall assure me of immortality."—Horace, *Carmina*, III, 30, 6. 38. "*I . . . province*"—the claim made for his philosophy by Francis Bacon.

unequalled, is almost sure to be a good-humored person, though liable to be tedious at times.

—What are the great faults of conversation? Want of ideas, want of words, want of manners, are the principal ones, I suppose you think. I don't doubt it, but I will tell you what I have found spoil more good talks than anything else;—long arguments on special points between people who differ on fundamental principles upon which these points depend. No men can have satisfactory relations with each other until they have agreed on certain *ultima* of belief not to be disturbed in ordinary conversation, and unless they have sense enough to trace the secondary questions depending upon these ultimate beliefs to their source. In short, just as a written constitution is essential to the best social order, so a code of finalities is a necessary condition of profitable talk between two persons. Talking is like playing on the harp; there is as much in laying the hand on the strings to stop their vibrations as in twanging them to bring out their music.

—Do you mean to say the pun-question is not clearly settled in your minds? Let me lay down the law upon the subject. Life and language are alike sacred. Homicide and *vericide*—that is, violent treatment of a word with fatal results to its legitimate meaning, which is its life—are alike forbidden. Manslaughter, which is the meaning of the one, is the same as man's laughter, which is the end of the other. A pun is *primâ facie* an insult to the person you are talking with. It implies utter indifference to or sublime contempt for his remarks, no matter how serious. I speak of total depravity, and one says all that is written on the subject is deep raving. I have committed my self-respect by talking with such a person. I should like to commit him, but cannot, because he is a nuisance. Or I speak of geological convulsions, and he asks me what was the cosine of Noah's ark; also, whether the Deluge was not a deal huger than any modern inundation.

A pun does not commonly justify a blow in return. But if a blow were given for such cause, and death ensued, the jury would be judges both of the facts and of the pun, and might, if the latter were of an aggravated character, return a verdict of justifiable homicide. Thus, in a case lately decided before Miller, J., Doe presented Roe a subscription paper, and urged the claims of suffering humanity. Roe replied by asking, When charity was like a top? It is in evidence that Doe preserved a dignified silence. Roe then said, "When it begins to hum." Doe then—and not till then—struck Roe, and his head happening to hit a bound volume of the Monthly Rag-bag and Stolen Miscellany, intense mortification ensued, with a fatal result. The chief laid down his notions of the law to his brother justices, who unanimously replied, "Jest so." The chief rejoined, that no man should jest so without being punished for it, and charged for the prisoner, who was acquitted, and the pun ordered to be burned by the sheriff. The bound volume was forfeited as a deodand, but not claimed.

**16. pun-question**—It may be necessary to call the attention of the student to the hidden puns which stud this castigation of punning. **21. primâ facie**—on the face of it. **33. Miller, J.**—the legal formula, meaning Judge Miller presiding; but the incorrigible Holmes plays on Joe Miller, the supposed author of a current jest-book. **42. deodand**—in English law a thing which causes the death of a person and which is therefore forfeited to the crown, for pious uses.

People that make puns are like wanton boys that put coppers on the railroad tracks. They amuse themselves and other children, but their little trick may upset a freight train of conversation for the sake of a battered witticism.

I will thank you, B.F., to bring down two books, of which I will mark the places on this slip of paper. (While he is gone, I may say that this boy, our landlady's youngest, is called BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, after the celebrated philosopher of that name. A highly merited compliment.)

I wished to refer to two eminent authorities. Now be so good as to listen. The great moralist says: "To trifle with the vocabulary which is the vehicle of social intercourse is to tamper with the currency of human intelligence. He who would violate the sanctities of his mother tongue would invade the recesses of the paternal till without remorse, and repeat the banquet of Saturn without an indigestion."

And, once more, listen to the historian. "The Puritans hated puns. The Bishops were notoriously addicted to them. The Lords Temporal carried them to the verge of license. Majesty itself must have its Royal quibble. 'Ye be burly, my Lord of Burleigh,' said Queen Elizabeth, 'but ye shall make less stir in our realm than my Lord of Leicester.' The gravest wisdom and the highest breeding lent their sanction to the practice. Lord Bacon playfully declared himself a descendant of 'Og, the King of Bashan. Sir Philip Sidney, with his last breath, reproached the soldier who brought him water, for wasting a casque full upon a dying man. A courtier, who saw Othello performed at the Globe Theatre, remarked, that the blackamoor was a brute, and not a man. 'Thou hast reason,' replied a great Lord, 'according to Plato his saying; for this be a two-legged animal *with* feathers.' The fatal habit became universal. The language was corrupted. The infection spread to the national conscience. Political double-dealings naturally grew out of verbal double meanings. The teeth of the new dragon were sown by the Cadmus who introduced the alphabet of equivocation. What was levity in the time of the Tudors grew to regicide and revolution in the age of the Stuarts."

Who was that boarder that just whispered something about the Macaulay-flowers of literature?—There was a dead silence.—I said calmly, I shall henceforth consider any interruption by a pun as a hint to change my boarding-house. Do not plead my example. If *I* have used any such, it has been only as a Spartan father would show up a drunken helot. We have done with them.

—If a logical mind ever found out anything with its logic?—I should say that its most frequent work was to build a *pons asinorum* over chasms which shrewd people can bestride without such a structure. You can hire logic, in the shape of a lawyer, to prove anything that you want to prove. You can buy

**9. great moralist**—This is Dr. Johnson, but the student will search in vain in Johnson's works for this amusing travesty of his style. **12. banquet of Saturn**—According to Greek myth, Saturn devoured all his children but one. **14. historian**—As hinted by Holmes's subsequent pun about the Macaulay-flowers of literature, the quotation from Macaulay is purely imaginary. It is scarcely necessary to explain who the various persons are. For Og see Num. 21:33. The point of the word-play regarding Othello will be seen when one remembers the manner of Desdemona's taking off. **35. helot**—slave. **37. pons asinorum**—literally, asses' bridge, the name applied to the fifth proposition of Bk. I of Euclid, because of the shape of the figure and the difficulty beginning students have in mastering the demonstration.



treastises to show that Napoleon never lived, and that no battle of Bunker-hill was ever fought. The great minds are those with a wide span, which couple truths related to, but far removed from, each other. Logicians carry the surveyor's chain over the track of which these are the true explorers. I value a

5 man mainly for his primary relations with truth, as I understand truth,—not for any secondary artifice in handling his ideas. Some of the sharpest men in argument are notoriously unsound in judgment. I should not trust the counsel of a clever debater, any more than that of a good chess-player. Either may of course advise wisely, but not necessarily because he wrangles or plays well.

10 The old gentleman who sits opposite got his hand up, as a pointer lifts his forefoot, at the expression, "his relations with truth, as I understand truth," and when I had done, sniffed audibly, and said I talked like a transcendentalist. For his part, common sense was good enough for him.

Precisely so, my dear sir, I replied; common sense, *as you understand it*.

15 We all have to assume a standard of judgment in our own minds, either of things or persons. A man who is willing to take another's opinion has to exercise his judgment in the choice of whom to follow, which is often as nice a matter as to judge of things for one's self. On the whole, I had rather judge men's minds by comparing their thoughts with my own, than judge of

20 thoughts by knowing who utter them. I must do one or the other. It does not follow, of course, that I may not recognize another man's thoughts as broader and deeper than my own; but that does not necessarily change my opinion, otherwise this would be at the mercy of every superior mind that held a different one. How many of our most cherished beliefs are like those drinking-

25 glasses of the ancient pattern, that serve us well so long as we keep them in our hand, but spill all if we attempt to set them down! I have sometimes compared conversation to the Italian game of *mora*, in which one player lifts his hand with so many fingers extended, and the other gives the number if he can. I show my thought, another his; if they agree, well; if they differ, we

30 find the largest common factor, if we can, but at any rate avoid disputing about remainders and fractions, which is to real talk what tuning an instrument is to playing on it.

—What if, instead of talking this morning, I should read you a copy of verses, with critical remarks by the author? Any of the company can retire

35 that like.

#### ALBUM VERSES.

When Eve had led her lord away,  
And Cain had killed his brother,  
The stars and flowers, the poets say,  
40 Agreed with one another

To cheat the cunning tempter's art,  
And teach the race its duty,

1. **treatises**—Archbishop Richard Whately (1787-1863), in an effort to demonstrate the absurdity of supposing Jesus Christ to be a myth, published in 1819 *Historic Doubts Relative to Napoleon Buonaparte*, in which, with the same logic, he demonstrated that Napoleon was a myth.

2. **span**—"There is something like this in J. H. Newman's *Grammar of Assent*. See the *Characteristics*, arranged by W. S. Lilly, p. 81." (Holmes's note, 1883)

By keeping on its wicked heart  
 Their eyes of light and beauty.

A million sleepless lids, they say,  
 Will be at least a warning;  
 And so the flowers would watch by day,  
 The stars from eve to morning.

5

On hill and prairie, field and lawn,  
 Their dewy eyes upturning,  
 The flowers still watch from reddening dawn  
 Till western skies are burning.

10

Alas! each hour of daylight tells  
 A tale of shame so crushing,  
 That some turn white as sea-bleached shells,  
 And some are always blushing.

But when the patient stars look down  
 On all their light discovers,  
 The traitor's smile, the murderer's frown,  
 The lips of lying lovers,

15

They try to shut their saddening eyes,  
 And in the vain endeavour  
 We see them twinkling in the skies,  
 And so they wink forever.

20

What do *you* think of these verses, my friends?—Is that piece an impromptu? said my landlady's daughter. (Aet. 19 +. Tender-eyed blonde. Long ringlets. Cameo pin. Gold pencil-case on a chain. Locket. Bracelet. Album. Autograph book. Accordeon. Reads Byron, Tupper, and Sylvanus Cobb, junior, while her mother makes the puddings. Says "Yes?" when you tell her anything.)—*Oui et non, ma petite*.—Yes and no, my child. Five of the seven verses were written off-hand; the other two took a week,—that is, were hanging round the desk in a ragged, forlorn, unrhymed condition as long as that. All poets will tell you just such stories. *C'est le DERNIER pas qui coute*. Don't you know how hard it is for some people to get out of a room after their visit is really over? They want to be off, and you want to have them off, but they don't know how to manage it. One would think they had been built in your parlour or study, and were waiting to be launched. I have contrived a sort of ceremonial inclined plane for such visitors, which being lubricated with certain smooth phrases, I back them down, metaphorically speaking, stern-foremost, into their "native element," the great ocean of out-doors. Well, now, there are poems as hard to get rid of as these rural visitors. They come in glibly, use up all the serviceable rhymes, *day, ray, beauty, duty, skies, eyes, other, brother, mountain, fountain*, and the like; and so they go on until you think it is time for the wind-up, and

25

30

35

40

24. Aet.—aged. 26. Tupper—Martin Tupper (1810-1889), author of a commonplace but once popular series called *Proverbial Philosophy* (1838; 1839-76). 26. Cobb—Sylvanus Cobb, Jr. (1823-1887), American author of innumerable sentimental fictions. 31. *C'est . . . coute*—It is the last step which costs; variant of the French proverb that it is the first step which costs.

the wind-up won't come on any terms. So they lie about until you get sick of the sight of them, and end by thrusting some cold scrap of a final couplet upon them, and turning them out of doors. I suspect a good many "impromptus" could tell just such a story as the above.—Here turning to our landlady, I used  
5 an illustration which pleased the company much at the time, and has since been highly commended. "Madam," I said, "you can pour three gills and three quarters of honey from that pint jug, if it is full, in less than one minute; but, Madam, you could not empty that last quarter of a gill, though you were turned into a marble Hebe, and held the vessel upside down for a thousand  
10 years."

One gets tired to death of the old, old rhymes, such as you see in that copy of verses,—which I don't mean to abuse, or to praise either. I always feel as if I were a cobbler, putting new top-leathers to an old pair of boot-soles and bod-ies, when I am fitting sentiments to these venerable jingles,

15                   .   .   .   .   .   .   .   .   .   youth  
                  .   .   .   .   .   .   .   .   .   morning  
                  .   .   .   .   .   .   .   .   .   truth  
                  .   .   .   .   .   .   .   .   .   warning.

Nine tenths of the "Juvenile Poems" written spring out of the above musical  
20 and suggestive coincidences.

"Yes?" said our landlady's daughter.

I did not address the following remark to her, and I trust, from her limited range of reading, she will never see it; I said it softly to my next neighbor.

When a young female wears a flat circular side-curl, gummed on each tem-  
25 ple,—when she walks with a male, not arm in arm, but his arm against the back of hers,—and when she says "Yes?" with the note of interrogation, you are generally safe in asking her what wages she gets, and who the "feller" was you saw her with.

"What were you whispering?" said the daughter of the house, moistening  
30 her lips, as she spoke, in a very engaging manner.

"I was only laying down a principle of social diagnosis."

"Yes?"

—It is curious to see how the same wants and tastes find the same modes of expression in all times and places. The young ladies of Otaheite, as you may  
35 see in Cook's Voyages, had a sort of crinoline arrangement fully equal in radius to the largest spread of our own lady-baskets. When I fling a Bay-State shawl over my shoulders, I am only taking a lesson from the climate that the Indian had learned before me. A *blanket*-shawl we call it, and not a plaid; and we wear it like the aborigines, and not like the Highlanders.

40 —We are the Romans of the modern world,—the great assimilating people. Conflicts and conquests are of course necessary accidents with us, as with our prototypes. And so we come to their style of weapon. Our army sword is the short, stiff, pointed *gladius* of the Romans; and the American bowie-knife is

9. *Hebe*—cupbearer to the gods in Greek mythology. 34. *Otaheite*—Tahiti, visited by Cap-  
tain James Cook in 1769. 35. *Cook's Voyages*—Consult *The Three Voyages of Captain James  
Cook round the World*, London, 1821, Vol. I, pp. 191-92. 43. *gladius*—sword.

the same tool, modified to meet the daily wants of civil society. I announce at this table an axiom not to be found in Montesquieu or the journals of Congress:

The race that shortens its weapons lengthens its boundaries.

*Corollary.* It was the Polish *lance* that left Poland at last with nothing of her own to bound.

5

"Dropped from her nerveless grasp the *shattered spear!*"

What business had Sarmatia to be fighting for liberty with a fifteen-foot pole between her and the breasts of her enemies? If she had but clutched the old Roman and young American weapon, and come to close quarters, there might have been a chance for her; but it would have spoiled the best passage in "The Pleasures of Hope."

10

—Self-made men?—Well yes. Of course every body likes and respects self-made men. It is a great deal better to be made in that way than not to be made at all. Are any of you younger people old enough to remember that Irishman's house on the marsh at Cambridgeport, which house he built from drain to chimney-top with his own hands? It took him a good many years to build it, and one could see that it was a little out of plumb, and a little wavy in outline, and a little queer and uncertain in general aspect. A regular hand could certainly have built a better house; but it was a very good house for a "self-made" carpenter's house, and people praised it, and said how remarkably well the Irishman had succeeded. They never thought of praising the fine blocks of houses a little farther on.

15

20

Your self-made man, whittled into shape with his own jack-knife, deserves more credit, if that is all, than the regular engine-turned article, shaped by the most approved pattern, and French-polished by society and travel. But as to saying that one is every way the equal of the other, that is another matter. The right of strict social discrimination of all things and persons, according to their merits, native or acquired, is one of the most precious republican privileges. I take the liberty to exercise it when I say that, *other things being equal*, in most relations of life I prefer a man of family.

30

What do I mean by a man of family?—O, I'll give you a general idea of what I mean. Let us give him a first-rate fit out; it costs us nothing.

Four or five generations of gentlemen and gentlewomen; among them a member of his Majesty's Council for the Province, a Governor or so, one or two Doctors of Divinity, a member of Congress, not later than the time of long boots with tassels.

35

Family portraits. The member of the Council, by Smibert. The great

2. **Montesquieu**—Charles de Secondat, Baron de la Brède et de Montesquieu (1689-1755), French political writer. 7. **Sarmatia**—Poland. 11. **Pleasures of Hope**—by Thomas Campbell (1777-1844). 34. **Council for the Province**—in colonial Massachusetts the body corresponding to the upper house of the modern legislature. 37. **portraits**—"The full-length pictures by Copley I was thinking of are such as may be seen in the Memorial Hall of Harvard University, but many are to be met with in different parts of New England, sometimes in the possession of the poor descendants of the rich gentlefolks in lace ruffles and glistening satins, grantees and grand dames of the ante-Revolutionary period. I remember one poor old gentleman who had nothing left of his family possessions but the full-length portraits of his ancestors, the Counsellor and his lady, saying, with a gleam of pleasantry which had come down from the days of Mather Byles, and 'Balch the Hatter,' and Sigourney, that he fared not so badly after all, for he had a pair of *canvasbacks* every day through the whole year.

"The mention of these names, all of which are mere traditions to myself and my contemporaries,

merchant-uncle by Copley, full length, sitting in his arm-chair, in a velvet cap and flowered robe, with a globe by him, to show the range of his commercial transactions, and letters with large red seals lying round, one directed conspicuously to The Honorable, etc., etc. Great-grandmother, by the same artist; 5 brown satin, lace very fine, hands superlative; grand old lady, stiffish, but imposing. Her mother, artist unknown; flat, angular, hanging sleeves; parrot on fist. A pair of Stuarts, viz., 1. A superb, full-blown, mediæval gentleman, with a fiery dash of Tory blood in his veins, tempered down with that of a fine old rebel grandmother, and warmed up with the best of old India Madeira; his 10 face is one flame of ruddy sunshine; his ruffled shirt rushes out of his bosom with an impetuous generosity, as if it would drag his heart after it; and his smile is good for twenty thousand dollars to the Hospital, besides ample bequests to all relatives and dependants. 2. Lady of the same; remarkable cap; high waist, as in time of Empire; bust *à la Josephine*; wisps of curls, like 15 celery-tips, at sides of forehead; complexion clear and warm, like rose-cordial. As for the miniatures by Malbone, we don't count them in the gallery.

Books, too, with the names of old college-students in them,—family names;—you will find them at the head of their respective classes in the days when students took rank on the catalogue from their parents' condition. Elzevirs, 20 with the Latinized appellations of youthful progenitors, and *Hic liber est meus* on the title-page. A set of Hogarth's original plates. Pope, original edition, 15 volumes, London, 1717. Barrow on the lower shelves, in folio. Tillotson on the upper, in a little dark platoon of octo-decimos.

Some family silver; a string of wedding and funeral rings; the arms of the 25 family curiously blazoned; the same in worsted, by a maiden aunt.

If the man of family has an old place to keep these things in, furnished with claw-footed chairs and black mahogany tables, and tall bevel-edged mirrors, and stately upright cabinets, his outfit is complete.

No, my friends, I go (always, other things being equal) for the man who

reminds me of the long succession of wits and humorists whose companionship has been the delight of their generation, and who leave nothing on record by which they will be remembered; Yoricks who set the table in a roar, story-tellers who gave us scenes of life in monologue better than the stilted presentments of the stage, and those always welcome friends with social interior furnishings, whose smile provoked the wit of others and whose rich, musical laughter was its abundant reward. Who among us in my earlier days ever told a story or carolled a rippling *chanson* so gayly, so easily, so charmingly as John Sullivan, whose memory is like the breath of a long bygone summer? Mr. Arthur Gilman has left his monument in the stately structures he planned; Mr. James T. Fields in the pleasant volumes full of precious recollections; but twenty or thirty years from now old men will tell their boys that the Yankee story-teller died with the first, and that the chief of our literary reminiscents, whose ideal portrait gallery reached from Wordsworth to Swinburne, left us when the second bowed his head and 'fell on sleep,' no longer to delight the guests whom his hospitality gathered around him with the pictures to which his lips gave life and action." (Holmes's note, 1883) The Smibert of the last line on p. 849 is John Smibert, one of the earliest American portrait painters, of whom little is known.

1. **Copley**—John Singleton Copley (1737-1815). 7. **Stuarts**—portraits by Gilbert Stuart (1755-1828), now best known for his portraits of Washington. 14. **Empire**—The fashions of the First Empire (Napoleon I) swept America, the styles being set by Josephine, Napoleon's first wife. 16. **Malbone**—Edward Greene Malbone (1777-1807), American miniaturist. 19. **Elzevirs**—The printing done by the firm of Elzevir of Venice was some of the most beautiful of the Renaissance work. 20. **Hic . . . meus**—This is my book. 21. **Hogarth**—William Hogarth (1697-1764), British painter and engraver, whose engravings in series, like "Marriage à la Mode," are much prized. 22. **Barrow**—Isaac Barrow (1630-1677), English theologian. 22. **Tillotson**—John Tillotson (1630-1694), eloquent English divine.

inherits family traditions and the cumulative humanities of at least four or five generations. Above all things, as a child, he should have tumbled about in a library. All men are afraid of books, who have not handled them from infancy. Do you ever suppose our dear *didascalos* over there ever read *Poli Synopsis*, or consulted *Castelli Lexicon*, while he was growing up to their stature? Not he; but virtue passed through the hem of their parchment and leather garments whenever he touched them, as the precious drugs sweated through the bat's handle in the Arabian story. I tell you he is at home wherever he smells the invigorating fragrance of Russia leather. No self-made man feels so. One may, it is true, have all the antecedents I have spoken of, and yet be a boor or a shabby fellow. One may have none of them, and yet be fit for councils and courts. Then let them change places. Our social arrangement has this great beauty, that its strata shift up and down as they change specific gravity, without being clogged by layers of prescription. But I still insist on my democratic liberty of choice, and I go for the man with the gallery of family portraits against the one with the twenty-five-cent daguerreotype, unless I found out that the last is the better of the two. 5 10 15

—I should have felt more nervous about the late comet, if I had thought the world was ripe. But it is very green yet, if I am not mistaken; and besides, there is a great deal of coal to use up, which I cannot bring myself to think was made for nothing. If certain things, which seem to me essential to a millennium, had come to pass, I should have been frightened; but they haven't. Perhaps you would like to hear my 20

#### LATTER-DAY WARNINGS.

When legislators keep the law, 25  
 When banks dispense with bolts and locks,  
 When berries, whortle—rasp—and straw—  
 Grow bigger *downwards* through the box,—

When he that selleth house or land  
 Shows leak in roof or flaw in right,— 30  
 When haberdashers choose the stand  
 Whose window hath the broadest light,—

When preachers tell us all they think,  
 And party leaders all they mean,—  
 When what we pay for, that we drink, 35  
 From real grape and coffee-bean,—

4. our dear *didascalos*—teacher. “‘Our dear *didascalos*’ was meant for Professor James Russell Lowell, now Minister to England. It requires the union of exceptional native gifts and generations of training to bring the ‘natural man’ of New England to the completeness of scholarly manhood, such as that which adds new distinction to the name he bears, already remarkable for its successive generations of eminent citizens.” (Holmes’s note, 1883) It should be noted, in connection with Holmes’s discussion of family, that New England was being flooded with immigrants while he was writing, and that the incursion was feared by the old Boston families. 4. *Poli Synopsis*—*Synopsis criticorum aliorumque Sacrae Scripturae* . . . London, 1669-76, by Matthew Poole (1625-1679). 5. *Castelli Lexicon*—*Lexicon medicum Graeco-Latinum*, Leipzig, 1713, by Bartolommeo Castelli, whose dates are unknown. 6. *virtue*—*Cf.* Mark 5: 27-28. 9. *Russia leather*—used for fine bindings.

When lawyers take what they would give,  
 And doctors give what they would take,—  
 When city fathers eat to live,  
 Save when they fast for conscience' sake,—

5       When one that hath a horse on sale  
       Shall bring his merit to the proof,  
 Without a lie for every nail  
       That holds the iron on the hoof,—

10       When in the usual place for rips  
       Our gloves are stitched with special care,  
 And guarded well the whalebone tips  
       When first umbrellas need repair,—

15       When Cuba's weeds have quite forgot  
       The power of suction to resist,  
 And claret-bottles harbor not  
       Such dimples as would hold your fist,—

20       When publishers no longer steal,  
       And pay for what they stole before,—  
 When the first locomotive's wheel  
       Rolls through the Hoosac tunnel's bore;—

*Till* then let Cumming blaze away,  
 And Miller's saints blow up the globe;  
 But when you see that blessed day,  
       *Then* order your ascension robe!

25       The company seemed to like the verses, and I promised them to read others occasionally, if they had a mind to hear them. Of course they would not expect it every morning. Neither must the reader suppose that all these things I have reported were said at any one breakfast-time. I have not taken the trouble to date them, as Raspail, *père*, used to date every proof he sent to the printer;  
 30       but they were scattered over several breakfasts; and I have said a good many more things since, which I shall very possibly print some time or other, if I am urged to do it by judicious friends.

I finished off with reading some verses of my friend the Professor, of whom you may perhaps hear more by and by. The Professor read them, he told me,

20. **bore**—"This hoped for, but almost despaired of, event, occurred on the 9th of February, 1875. The writer of the above lines was as much pleased as his fellow-citizens at the termination of an enterprise which gave constant occasion for the most inveterate pun on record. When the other conditions referred to above are as happily fulfilled as this has been, he will still say as before, that it is time for the ascension garment to be ordered." (Holmes's note, 1883) 21. **Cumming**—Alfred Cumming (1803-1873), appointed territorial governor of Utah in May, 1857, went to take possession of his territory accompanied by a detachment of the United States army because of the opposition of the Mormons. The so-called "Mormon War," which was mostly a clash of proclamations, ran through 1858-59, while Holmes was writing. 22. **Miller**—William Miller (1782-1849), founder of the Adventist Church, who advertised the second coming of Christ for 1843-44. 29. **Raspail**—François-Vincent Raspail (1794-1878), French medical writer.

at a farewell meeting, where the youngest of our great Historians met a few of his many friends at their invitation.

Yes, we knew we must lose him,—though friendship may claim  
To blend her green leaves with the laurels of fame;  
Though fondly, at parting, we call him our own,  
’Tis the whisper of love when the bugle has blown. 5

As the rider who rests with the spur on his heel,—  
As the guardsman who sleeps in his corselet of steel,—  
As the archer who stands with his shaft on the string,  
He stoops from his toil to the garland we bring. 10

What pictures yet slumber unborn in his loom  
Till their warriors shall breathe and their beauties shall bloom,  
While the tapestry lengthens the life-glowing dyes  
That caught from our sunsets the stain of their skies!

In the alcoves of death, in the charnels of time,  
Where flit the gaunt spectres of passion and crime,  
There are triumphs untold, there are martyrs unsung,  
There are heroes yet silent to speak with his tongue! 15

Let us hear the proud story which time has bequeathed  
From lips that are warm with the freedom they breathed!  
Let him summon its tyrants and tell us their doom,  
Though he sweep the black past like Van Tromp with his broom! 20

The dream flashes by, for the west-winds awake  
On pampas, on prairie, o’er mountain and lake,  
To bathe the swift bark, like a sea-girdled shrine,  
With incense they stole from the rose and the pine. 25

So fill a bright cup with the sunlight that gushed  
When the dead summer’s jewels were trampled and crushed;  
THE TRUE KNIGHT OF LEARNING,—the world holds him dear,—  
Love bless him, Joy crown him, God speed his career! 30

## JONATHAN EDWARDS

This essay was originally printed in the *International Review* for July, 1880, and then gathered into *Pages from an Old Volume of Life* (1883). Much of its doctrine is scattered through Holmes’s other writings, especially the Breakfast-Table series, but

1. **Historians**—“The youngest of our great historians,” referred to in the poem, was John Lothrop Motley. His career of authorship was as successful as it was noble, and his works are among the chief ornaments of our national literature. Are Republics still ungrateful, as of old?” (Holmes’s note, 1883) If it is remembered that Motley was the historian of the Dutch struggle for liberty against Spain, the allusions in the poem become clearer. 22. **Van Tromp**—After defeating the English in the Anglo-Dutch War in the reign of Charles II, the Dutch Admiral van Tromp fixed a broom to his ship to signify he had swept the enemy from the seas.



no single essay of his more clearly reveals the liberal bent of the author's mind, or shows more adroitly the manner of his attack upon Calvinistic theology.

AS THE centennial anniversaries of noteworthy events and signal births come round, frequent and importunate as tax-bills, fearful with superlatives as schoolgirls' letters, wearisome with iteration as a succession of drum-solos, noisy with trumpet-blowing through the land as the jubilee of Israel, we are, perhaps, in danger of getting tired of reminiscences. A foreigner might well think the patron saint of America was Saint Anniversariy. As our aboriginal predecessors dug up the bones of their ancestors when they removed from one place to another, and carried them with the living on their journey, so we consider it a religious duty, at stated intervals in the journey of time, to exhume the memories of dead personages and events, and look at them in the light of the staring and inquisitive present, before consigning them again to the sepulchre.

A recent centennial celebration seems to make this a fitting time for any of us, who may feel a call or an inclination, to examine the life and religious teachings of a man of whom Mr. Bancroft has said, referring to his relations to his theological successors, that "his influence is discernible on every leading mind. Bellamy and Hopkins were his pupils; Dwight was his expositor; Smalley, Emmons, and many others were his followers; through Hopkins his influence reached Kirkland, and assisted in moulding the character of Channing." Of all the scholars and philosophers that America had produced before the beginning of the present century, two only had established a considerable and permanent reputation in the world of European thought,—Benjamin Franklin and Jonathan Edwards. No two individuals could well differ more in temperament, character, beliefs, and mode of life than did these two men, representing respectively intellect, practical and abstract. Edwards would have called Franklin an infidel, and turned him over to the uncovenanted mercies, if, indeed, such were admitted in his programme, of the Divine administration. Franklin

**1. centennial**—the hundredth anniversary of the declaration of American Independence, 1876, was the occasion of many patriotic and commemorative celebrations. **4. trumpet-blowing**—*Cf.*, for example, Ps. 47:5. **15. Bancroft**—George Bancroft (1800-1891), the historian, contributed the biographical article on Edwards to Appleton's *American Cyclopaedia*, 1st ed., New York, 1874, Vol. VI, to which Holmes frequently refers. The quotation is from p. 444. **17. Bellamy**—Joseph Bellamy (1719-1790), a "New Light" Connecticut theologian, who substituted a theory of atonement for all in place of atonement for the elect only. **17. Hopkins**—Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803), who carried Edwards' theology to its extreme limits. He was associated with Edwards at Stockbridge, and later removed to Newport, Rhode Island. **17. Dwight**—Timothy Dwight (1752-1817), the grandson of Edwards, elected president of Yale in 1791, and author of *Theology Explained and Defended* (5 vols., 1818-19), one of the most powerful antideistic works of its time. **17. Smalley**—John Smalley (1734-1820), a pupil of Bellamy, author of *Natural and Moral Inability* (1769). **18. Emmons**—Nathaniel Emmons (1745-1840), founder of the Massachusetts missionary society, who prepared fifty-seven young men for the ministry. **19. Kirkland**—John T. Kirkland (1770-1840), president of Harvard 1810-28, one of the founders of the *Monthly Anthology*, who led the way to Unitarianism. **19. Channing**—William E. Channing (1780-1842), a member of Hopkins' congregation, who revolted against his doctrine, became a Unitarian, and published the *Moral Argument against Calvinism*. **22-23. Franklin . . . Edwards**—For biographical outlines of these men see the selections in this anthology. **26. uncovenanted**—The "covenant" theology finds the chief bond between God and man in the series of "covenants" or bargains struck between the two, as recorded in the Old Testament and, to a lesser extent, in the New.

would have called Edwards a fanatic, and tried the effect of "Poor Richard's" common-sense on the major premises of his remorseless syllogisms.

We are proud of the great Boston-born philosopher, who snatched the thunderbolt from heaven with one hand, and the sceptre from tyranny with the other. So, also, we are proud of the great New England divine, of whom it might be said quite as truly, "*Eripuit coelo fulmen*." Did not Dugald Stewart and Sir James Mackintosh recognize his extraordinary ability? Did not Robert Hall, in one of those "fits of easy transmission," in which loose and often extravagant expressions escape from excitable minds, call him "the greatest of the sons of men"? Such praise was very rare in those days, and it is no wonder that we have made the most of these and similar fine phrases. We always liked the English official mark on our provincial silver, and there was not a great deal of it.

In studying the characteristics of Edwards in his life and writings, we find so much to remind us of Pascal that, if we believed in the doctrine of metempsychosis, we could almost feel assured that the Catholic had come back to earth in the Calvinist. Both were of a delicate and nervous constitution, habitual invalids. Their features, it is true, have not so much in common. The portrait prefixed to Dwight's edition of Edwards's works shows us a high forehead, a calm, steady eye, a small, rather prim mouth, with something about it of the unmated and no longer youthful female. The medallion of Pascal shows a head not large in the dome, but ample in the region of the brow, strongly marked features, a commanding Roman nose, a square jaw, a questioning mouth, an asserting chin,—a look altogether not unlike that of the late Reverend James Walker, except for its air of invalidism. Each was remarkable for the precocious development of his observing and reflecting powers. Their spiritual as well as their mental conditions were parallel in many respects. Both had a strong tendency to asceticism. Pascal wore a belt studded with sharp points turned inward, which he pressed against his body when he felt the aggressive movements of temptation. He was jealous of any pleasure derived from the delicacy of his food, which he regarded solely as the means of supporting life. Edwards did not wear the belt of thorns in material shape, but he pricked himself with perpetual self-accusations, and showed precisely the same jealousy about the gratification of the palate. He was spared, we may say in parenthesis, the living to see the republication in Boston of his fellow-countryman, Count Rumford's, essay "Of the Pleasure of Eating, and of the Means that may be

**3-4. snatched . . . tyranny**—Turgot is the author of the Latin phrase on a medal struck in France to honor Franklin: *Eripuit coelo fulmen sceptrumque tyrannis*, translated in the text. **6. Stewart**—Dugald Stewart (1753-1828), one of the Scottish "common-sense" philosophers. **7. Mackintosh**—Sir James Mackintosh (1765-1832), an eclectic philosopher, writer, and conversationalist. **8. Hall**—Robert Hall (1764-1831), a leader of the English Baptists. The index to his work does not reveal where he spoke of Edwards. **8. "fits of easy transmission"**—Cf. note 39, p. 431. **15. Pascal**—Blaise Pascal (1626-1662), one of the greatest of seventeenth-century French moralists. **15. metempsychosis**—transmigration of souls. **19. Dwight's edition**—Edwards' works were edited in 10 vols. by Sereno E. Dwight, 1829-30. **25. Walker**—James Walker (1794-1874), president of Harvard 1853-60. **36. Rumford**—Sir Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford, born in Woburn, Massachusetts, 1753, died in Paris, 1814. "Of the Pleasures of Eating, and of the Means that may be employed for increasing it" is the title of Chap. 11 of his essay "Of Food; and particularly of feeding the poor," originally published in the *Bibliothèque britannique*, and republished in Rumford's *Complete Works*, 4 vols., by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Boston, 1870-75.

employed for increasing it." Pascal and Edwards were alike sensitive, pure in heart and in life, profoundly penetrated with the awful meaning of human existence; both filled with a sense of their own littleness and sinfulness; both trembling in the presence of God and dwelling much upon his wrath and its  
 5 future manifestations; both singularly powerful as controversialists, and alive all over to the *gaudia certaminis*,—one fighting the Jesuits and the other the Arminians. They were alike in their retiring and melancholy kind of life. Pascal was a true poet who did not care to wear the singing robes. As much has been claimed for Edwards on the strength of a passage here and there which  
 10 shows sentiment and imagination. But this was in his youthful days, and the "little white flower" of his diary fades out in his polemic treatises, as the "star of Bethlehem" no longer blossoms when the harsh blades of grass crowd around it. Pascal's prose is light and elastic everywhere with *esprit*; much of that of Edwards, thickened as it is with texts from Scripture, reminds us of  
 15 the unleavened bread of the Israelite: holy it may be, but heavy it certainly is. The exquisite wit which so delights us in Pascal could not be claimed for Edwards; yet he could be satirical in a way to make the gravest person smile,—as in the description of the wonderful animal the traveller tells of as inhabiting Terra del Fuego, with which he laughs his opponents to scorn in his treatise  
 20 on the "Freedom of the Will." Both had the same fondness for writing in the form of aphorisms,—natural to strong thinkers, who act like the bankers whose habit it is to sign checks, but not to count out money,—and both not rarely selected the same or similar subjects for their brief utterances.

Even in some external conditions Pascal and Edwards suggest comparison.  
 25 Both were greatly influenced by devout, spiritually-minded women. Pascal, who died unmarried, had his two sisters,—Gilberte and Jacqueline,—the first of whom, afterwards Madame Périer, wrote the Memoir of her brother, so simply, so sweetly, that one can hardly read it without thinking he hears it in her own tender woman's voice,—as if she were audibly shaping the syllables  
 30 which are flowing through his mute consciousness. Edwards's wife, Sarah Pierrepont, was the lady of whom he wrote the remarkable account (cited by Mr. Bancroft in his article on Edwards, as it stands in the first edition of Appleton's "Cyclopaedia") before he had made her acquaintance,—she being then only thirteen years old. She was spiritual to exaltation and ecstasy. To his  
 35 sister Jerusha, seven years younger than himself, he was tenderly attached. She, too, was of a devoutly religious character.

There were certain differences in the midst of these parallelisms. Auvergne,

6. *gaudia certaminis*—joys of conflict. 7. *Arminians*—followers of the theologian James, or Jakob, Arminius (1560-1609), who modified Calvinistic doctrine by changing the notion of predestination, making the atonement universal, holding that salvation is possible to all, interpreting depravity as a bias or inclination of the mind which can be overcome (free will), thinking of grace as a free gift, holding that conversion is possible by persuasion and moral means, and believing that falls from grace are possible. The student will note various references to Arminianism in the essay. 11-12. "star of Bethlehem"—the white field onion. 13. *esprit*—wit. 15. *unleavened bread*—*Cf. Ex. 12: 15 ff.* 18. *animal*—See Edwards' *On the Freedom of the Will*, Pt. IV, sec. II. 26. *Gilberte*—Gilberte Pascal (1620-1687). 26. *Jacqueline*—Jacqueline Pascal (1625-1661). 27. *Memoir*—to be found in the edition of Pascal edited by Brunschvicg and Boutroux, Vol. I, pp. 35-121. 31. *Pierrepont*—Sarah Pierrepont (Edwards) (1710-1758). 31. *account*—See p. 44. 35. *Jerusha*—Jerusha Edwards (1710-1728). 37. *Auvergne*—Pascal was born in Clermont in Auvergne.

with its vine-clad slopes, was not the same as Connecticut, with its orchards of  
 elbowed apple-trees. Windsor, a pleasant name, not wanting in stately associa-  
 tions, sounds less romantic than Clermont. We think of Blaise and Jacqueline,  
 wandering in the shadow of *Puy de Dome*, and kneeling in the ancient cathed-  
 ral of that venerable town where the first trumpet of the first crusade was  
 blown; and again we see Jonathan and Jerusha straying across lots to Poquan-  
 nock, or sitting in the cold church, side by side on the smileless Sabbath.  
 Whether or not Edwards had ever read Pascal is not shown by any reference  
 in his writings, but there are some rather curious instances of similar or iden-  
 tical expressions. Thus the words of his sermon, in which he speaks of sinners  
 as "in the hands of an angry God," are identical in meaning with Pascal's  
 "dans les mains d'un Dieu irrité." His expression applied to man, "a poor little  
 worm," sounds like a translation of Pascal's "chétif vermisseau." A paragraph  
 of his detached observations entitled "Body Infinite," reminds one of the sec-  
 ond paragraph of the twenty-fourth chapter of Pascal's "Pensées." These re-  
 semblances are worth noting in a comparison of the two writers. Dealing with  
 similar subjects, it is not strange to find them using similar expressions. But it  
 seems far from unlikely that Edwards had fallen in with a copy of Pascal, and  
 borrowed, perhaps unconsciously, something of his way of thinking.

We may hope that their spirits have met long ago in a better world, for  
 each was a saintly being, who might have claimed for him the epithet applied  
 to Spinoza. But if they had met in this world, Pascal would have looked sadly  
 on Edwards as a heretic, and Edwards would have looked sternly on Pascal  
 as a papist. Edwards, again, would have scouted an Arminian; but to Bossuet,  
 the great Bishop of Meaux, a *Socinian*, even, was only a developed Calvinist.

The feeling which naturally arises in contemplating the character of Jona-  
 than Edwards is that of deep reverence for a man who seems to have been  
 anointed from his birth; who lived a life pure, laborious, self-denying, occupied  
 with the highest themes, and busy in the highest kind of labor,—such a life  
 as in another church might have given him a place in the "Acta Sanctorum."  
 We can in part account for what he was when we remember his natural in-  
 herited instincts, his training, his faith, and the conditions by which he was  
 surrounded. His ancestors had fed on sermons so long that he must have been  
 born with Scriptural texts lying latent in his embryonic thinking-marrow, like

4. *Puy de Dome*—mountain in south central France. 5. *first trumpet*—Pope Urban II went to Clermont and there on November 26, 1095, preached a great sermon which inaugurated the First Crusade. 6. *Poquannock*—modern Poquonock, a village in the town of Windsor in Connecticut. 10. *sermon*—preached at Enfield, July 8, 1741, "and attended with remarkable impressions on many of the hearers." 12. "dans . . . irrité"—translated in the text. 13. "chétif vermisseau"—mean little worm. 15. "Pensées"—The paragraph in question refers to the concept of an infinite being without parts. The paragraph of Edwards to which Holmes refers does not appear to be listed in the index to Edwards' *Works*. 18. *copy of Pascal*—Copies of the *Pensées* found their way to New England as early as the middle of the seventeenth century. 21-22. *epithet . . . Spinoza*—Spinoza was called "the God-intoxicated man." 24. *Bossuet*—Jacques Bénigne Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux (1627-1704), the greatest French preacher of the seventeenth century. 25. *Socinian*—a follower of Faustus Socinus (1539-1604), who denied the existence of the Trinity, the personality of the Devil, the depravity of man, the atonement, and the eternity of Hell. 30. "Acta Sanctorum"—*Deeds of the Saints*, a title given to records of the saints published by one or another of the various Catholic bodies. 33. *ancestors*—The earliest known ancestor of Edwards was an Anglican clergyman, whose widow and son emigrated to America in 1640.

the undeveloped picture in a film of collodion. He was bred in the family of a Connecticut minister in a town where revivals of religion were of remarkable frequency. His mother, it may be suspected, found him in brains, for she was called the brighter of the old couple; and the fact that she did not join the church until Jonathan was twelve years old implies that she was a woman who was not to be hurried into becoming a professor of religion simply because she was the wife of the Reverend Timothy Edwards. His faith in the literal inspiration of the Old and New Testament was implicit; it was built on texts, as Venice and Amsterdam are built on piles. The "parable of Eden," as our noble Boston preacher calls it, was to him a simple narrative of exact occurrences. The fruit, to taste which conferred an education, the talking ophidian, the many-centuried patriarchs, the floating menagerie with the fauna of the drowning earth represented on its decks, the modelling of the first woman about a bone of the first man—all these things were to him, as to those about him, as real historical facts as the building of the Pyramids. He was surrounded with believers like himself, who held the doctrines of Calvinism in all their rigor. But, on the other hand, he saw the strongholds of his position threatened by the gradual approach or the actual invasion of laxer teachings and practices, so that he found himself, as he thought, forced into active hostilities, and soon learned his strength as a combatant, and felt the stern delight of the warrior as champion of the church militant. This may have given extravagance to some of his expressions, and at times have blinded him to the real meaning as well as to the practical effect of the doctrines he taught to the good people of Northampton, and gave to the world in pages over which many a reader has turned pale and trembled.

In order to get an idea of what the theological system is of which he was the great New England exponent, we will take up briefly some of its leading features. It is hardly necessary to say that Edwards's main doctrines agree with those of the Westminster Assembly's two catechisms. These same doctrines almost assumed the character of a state religion when the "Confession of Faith" of the Synod assembled in Boston, May 12, 1680, was printed by an Order of the General Court of Massachusetts, passed May 19 of the same year. But we are to look at these doctrines, as Edwards accepted and interpreted them.

The God of Edwards is not a Trinity, but a Quaternity. The fourth Person is an embodied abstraction, to which he gave the name of *Justice*. As Jupiter was governed by Fate, so Jehovah is governed by Justice. This takes precedence of all other elements in the composite Divinity. Its province is to demand *satisfaction*, though as its demand is infinite, it can never be satiated. This satisfaction is derived from the infliction of misery on sensitive beings, who, by the fact of coming into existence under conditions provided or permitted by

1. picture . . . collodion—The reference is to the development of photographic plates. 3. found him—endowed him. 10. noble Boston preacher—presumably the Rev. Phillips Brooks (1835-1893). 11. ophidian—serpent. "Ophidian" is a favorite word of Holmes. 11-14. fruit . . . man—Cf. Gen. 2-3; 6-7; 10; and so forth. 29. catechisms—the "Larger" Catechism, printed 1647, and the "Shorter" Catechism, printed 1648, by direction of the English Parliament. 30. "Confession of Faith"—printed 1649 by direction of the English Parliament, but dating from 1647. The classic statement of British Calvinistic theology. 34. Quaternity—a God of four persons.

their Creator, have incurred his wrath and received his curse as their patrimony. Its work, as in the theology of Dante, is seen in the construction and perpetual maintenance of an *Inferno*, which Edwards mentions to ears polite and impolite with an unsparing plainness, emphasis, and frequency such as would have contented the satirical Cowper. The familiar quotation,—

5

“Quantum vertice ad auras  
Aetherias, tantum radice ad Tartara tendit,”—

is eminently applicable to Edwards's theology; it flowers in heaven, but its roots, from which it draws its life and its strength, reach down to the deepest depths of hell.

10

The omnipotence of Justice is needed in his system, for it is dealing, as was said above, with infinite demands, which nothing short of it could begin to meet. The proof of this is a very simple mathematical one, and can be made plain to the most limited intelligence.

*Sin*, which is the subject of Justice, gets its measure by comparing it with the excellence of the Being whose law it violates. As the Being is infinite in perfections, every sin against him acquires the character of infinite magnitude. “Justice” demands a punishment commensurate with its infinite dimensions. This is the ground upon which the eternity of future punishment is an imperative condition prescribed by “Justice” to the alleged omnipotence of the Creator. Who and what is the being made subject to this infinite penalty?

20

*Man*, as Edwards looks at him, is placed in a very singular condition. He has innumerable duties and not the smallest right, or the least claim on his Maker. In this doctrine Edwards differs from the finer and freer thinker with whom I have compared him. “There is a reciprocal duty between God and man,” is one of Pascal's noblest sayings. No such relation exists for Edwards; and if at any time there seems a balance in favor of the creature, the sovereignty of the Creator is a sponge which wipes out all and costs nothing,—nothing but the misery of a human being; and after all, in the view of the saints, which must be correct, we are assured by Edwards that it will all be right, for “the glory of God will in their estimate be of greater consequence than the welfare of thousands and millions of souls.” Man, since Adam's fall, is born in a state of moral inability,—a kind of spiritual hemiplegia. He is competent, as we have seen, to commit an infinite amount of sin, but he cannot of himself perform the least good action. He is hateful to his Maker, *ex officio*, as a human being. It is no wonder that Edwards uses hard words about such a being. This is a specimen from one of those sermons to which the long-suffering people of Northampton listened for twenty-four years: “You have never loved God, who is infinitely glorious and lovely; and why then is God under obligations to love you, who are all over deformed and loathsome as a filthy worm, or rather a hateful viper?” And on the very next page he returns to his epithets and comparisons, paying his respects to his fellow-creatures in the following

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3. ears polite—“who never mentions hell to ears polite,” Pope, *Moral Essays*, IV, line 149. Holmes, by a slip of memory, attributes the line to William Cowper. 6-7. “Quantum . . . tendit”—Virgil, *Georgics*, II, lines 291-92. The sense may be gleaned from the text. 33. hemiplegia—a palsy affecting one side of the body only. 35. *ex officio*—by reason of his status as a human being.

words: "Seeing you thus disregard so great a God, is it a heinous thing for God to slight you, a little wretched, despicable creature; a worm, a mere nothing and less than nothing; a vile insect that has risen up in contempt against the Majesty of heaven and earth?" We can hardly help remarking just here that this kind of  
 5 language will seem to most persons an unwholesome sort of rhetoric for a preacher to indulge in; not favorable to the sweetness of his own thoughts, and not unlikely to produce irritation in some of his more excitable hearers. But he was led, as it will soon appear, into the use of expressions still more fitted to disturb the feelings of all persons of common sensibility, and especially of the  
 10 fathers and mothers who listened to him. Such was Edwards's estimate of humanity.

His opinion of the *Devil* is hardly more respectful than that which he entertains of man. "Though the Devil be exceedingly crafty and subtle," he says, "yet he is one of the greatest fools and blockheads in the world, as the  
 15 subtilest of wicked men are." But for all he was such a fool, he has played a very important part, Edwards thinks, in the great events of the world's history. He was in a dreadful rage just before the flood. He brought about the peopling of America by leading men and women there so as to get them out of the way of the gospel. Thus he was, according to Edwards, the true Pilgrim Father of  
 20 the New World. He himself had seen the Devil prevail against two revivals of religion in this country. The personal presence of the great enemy of mankind was as real to Edwards as the spectral demons in the woods about Gloucester, which the soldiers fired at but could not hit, were to Cotton Mather and his reverend correspondent. How the specialty of the archfiend differed  
 25 from that of Edwards's "Justice" is not perfectly clear, except that one executes what the other orders, the Evil Angel finding pleasure in inflicting torture, and "Justice" attaining the end known to theologians as "satisfaction" in seeing it inflicted. And as Edwards couples his supreme principle with an epithet corresponding to a well-known human passion,—speaking of it as "revenging  
 30 justice,"—we can have some idea of what "satisfaction" means in the light of the common saying that "revenge is sweet;" but the explanation does not leave the soul in seraphic harmony with the music of the spheres or the keynote of its own being.

It will be enough for our present purpose to refer briefly to the leading  
 35 doctrines of several of Edwards's special works.

In his treatise, "The Great Christian Doctrine of Original Sin defended," he teaches that "God, in his constitution with Adam, dealt with him as a *public*  
 person,—as the head of the human species,—and had respect to his posterity, as included in him." Again: "God dealing with Adam as the head of his posterity  
 40 (as has been shown) and treating them as one, he deals with his posterity as having *all sinned in him*." There was always a difficulty in dealing with the relation of infants to the divine government. It is doubtful whether Edwards would have approved of the leniency of their sentence in Michael Wigglesworth's "Day of Doom," in which the comparatively comfortable quarters of

20. two revivals—in 1734-35 and 1740-42 (the Great Awakening). 23. Mather—the Rev. Cotton Mather (1663-1728). 36. "The Great . . . defended"—published at Boston in 1758. 44. "Day of Doom"—*The Day of Doom* (1662) by Michael Wigglesworth (1631-1705), a once popular poem setting forth the cruder aspects of damnation according to Calvin. Holmes quotes from the best-known stanza.

"The easiest room in hell"

are assigned to the little creatures. Edwards argues against the charitable supposition that, though sin is truly imputed to infants, so that they are as a consequence, exposed to a proper punishment, yet that *all* Adam's guilt not being imputed to them, they might be let off with only temporal death or annihilation. He maintains, on the contrary, "that none can, in good consistence with themselves, own a real *imputation* of the guilt of Adam's first sin to his posterity, without owning that they are *justly* treated as sinners, truly guilty, and *children of wrath*, on that account; nor unless they allow a just imputation of the *whole* of the *evil* of that transgression, at least all that pertains to that act, as a full and complete violation of the *covenant* which God had established; even as much as if each one of mankind had the like covenant established with him singly, and had, by the like direct and full act of rebellion, violated it himself." The little albuminous automaton is not sent into the world without an inheritance. Every infant of the human race is entitled to one undivided share of the guilt and consequent responsibility of the Trustee to whom the Sovereign had committed its future, and who invested it in a fraudulent concern.

By the "Work of Redemption," of which Edwards wrote an elaborate history, a few of the human race have been exempted from the infinite penalties consequent upon being born upon this planet, the atmosphere of which is a slow poison, killing everybody after a few score of years. But "the bulk of mankind" go eventually to the place prepared for them by "Justice," of which place and its conditions Edwards has given full and detailed descriptions.

The essay on "God's Chief End in Creation" reaches these two grand results: "God aims at satisfying justice in the eternal damnation of sinners, which will be satisfied with their damnation considered no otherwise than with regard to its eternal duration. God aims to satisfy his infinite grace or benevolence by the bestowment of a good infinitely valuable because eternal."

His idea of the "Nature of True Virtue," as expressed in his treatise with that title, is broad enough for the *το καλον* of the most ancient or the most modern philosophy. A principle of virtue is, according to Edwards, "union of heart to being, simply considered; which implies a disposition to benevolence to being, in general." This definition has been variously estimated by philosophical critics. There is something in it which reminds one of the "ether" of the physicists. This is a conceivable if not a necessary medium, but no living thing we know anything about can live in it, can fly or breathe in it, and we must leave it to the angels, with whose physiology we are not acquainted.

The full title of the work on which Edwards's reputation as a thinker mainly rests is, "A careful and strict Inquiry into the modern prevailing notions of that Freedom of the Will which is supposed to be essential to moral agency, virtue and vice, reward and punishment, praise and blame."

14. albuminous automaton—human embryo. 16. Trustee—Adam. 19. "Work of Redemption"—Edwards' *A History of the Work of Redemption* . . . was first published in Edinburgh (1774). 25. "God's . . . Creation"—One of *Two Dissertations* published in Boston (1765). The full title is: "Concerning the End for which God created the World." 30. "Nature . . . Virtue"—part of *Two Dissertations*, published at Boston (1765). 31. *το καλον*—the good. 41. Freedom of the Will—published at Boston in 1754.



Edwards thinks it necessary to meet those who object to reasonings like his that they run "into nice scholastic distinctions and abstruse metaphysical subtleties, and set these in opposition to common-sense." But an essay which Robert Hall read and re-read with intense interest before he was nine years old must have a good deal in it which comes within the compass of moderate understandings. The truth is, his argument, unfolded with infinite patience and admirable ingenuity, is nothing but a careful evolution of the impossibilities involved in the idea of that old scholastic thesis best known in the popular form of the puzzle called in learned books *l'âne de Buridan*, and in common speech "the ass between two bundles of hay,"—or as Leibnitz has it, between two pastures. A more dignified statement of it is to be found at the beginning of the fourth canto of Dante's "Paradiso." The passage is thus given in Mr. Longfellow's translation:—

15                   "Between two viands equally removed  
                  And tempting, a free man would die of hunger,  
                  Ere either he could bring unto his teeth."

The object of Edwards was to prove that such a state of equilibrium, supposed by his Arminian opponents to be necessary to account for human freedom and responsibility, does not and cannot exist. Leibnitz had already denied its possibility without any express act of the Creator.

20       The reader of this celebrated treatise may well admire the sleuth-hound-like sagacity and tenacity with which the keen-scented reasoner follows the devious tracks of his adversaries; yet he can hardly help feeling that a vast number of words have been expended in proving over and over again a proposition which, as put by the great logician, is self-evident. In fact, Edwards has more than once stated his own argument with a contemptuous brevity, as if he felt that he had been paying out in farthings what he could easily hand us in the form of a shilling. Here is one of his condensed statements:—

30       "There is no high degree of refinement and abstruse speculation in determining that a thing is not before it is, and so cannot be the cause of itself; or that the first act of free choice has not another act of free choice going before that to excite or direct it; or in determining that no choice can be made while the mind remains in a state of absolute indifference; that preference and equilibrium never co-exist; and that therefore no choice is made in a state of liberty consisting in indifference; and that  
35       so far as the Will is determined by motives, exhibiting and operating previous to the act of the Will, so far it is not determined by the act of the Will itself; that nothing can begin to be, which before was not, without a cause, or some antecedent ground or reason why it then begins to be; that effects depend on their causes, and are connected with them; that virtue is not the worse, nor sin the better, for the  
40       strength of inclination with which it is practised, and the difficulty which thence arises of doing otherwise; and that when it is already infallibly known that the thing will be, it is not contingent whether it will ever be or no; or that it can be truly said, notwithstanding, that it is not necessary it should be, but it either may be, or may not be."

4. Robert Hall—See note 8, p. 555. 9. *l'âne de Buridan*—Buridan's ass, from the figure used by Jean Buridan, a fourteenth-century French "schoolman." 10. Leibnitz—See note 14, p. 407, 14-16. "Between two viands . . . teeth"—*Paradiso*, IV, lines 1-3.

This subject of the freedom of the will, which Milton's fallen angels puzzled over, and found themselves

"In wandering mazes lost,"—

of which Chaucer's "Nonne's Preeste" says,—

"That in scole is gret altercation  
In this matere and gret disputison,  
And hath ben of an hundred thousand men,"—

5

is one which we can hardly touch without becoming absorbed in its contemplation. We are all experts in the matter of volition. We may have read much or little; we may have made it a special subject of thought or not: each of us has at any rate been using his will during every waking hour of his life, and must have some practical acquaintance with its working within him. 10

The drift of Edwards's argument is to show that, though we are free to follow our will, we are not free to form an act of volition, but that this of necessity obeys the strongest motive. As the natural man—that is every man since the fall of Adam—is corrupt in all his tendencies, it follows that his motives, and consequently his moral volitions, are all evil until changed by grace, which is a free gift to such as are elected from eternity according to God's good pleasure. "The doctrine of a self-determining will as the ground of all moral good and evil tends to prevent any proper exercises of faith in God and Christ in the affair of our salvation, as it tends to prevent all dependence upon them." 15 20

In spite of any general assertions of Edwards to the contrary, we find our wills tied up hand and foot in the logical propositions which he knots inextricably about them; and yet when we lay down the book, we feel as if there was something left free after all. We cannot help saying *E pur si muove*. We are disposed to settle the matter as magisterially as Dr. Johnson did. "Sir," said he, "we know our will is free, and *there's* an end on't." 25

Not so certainly do we know this, perhaps, as the great dogmatist affirms. "A wooden top," says Hobbes, "that is lashed by the boys, and runs about, sometimes to one wall, sometimes to another, sometimes spinning, sometimes hitting men on the shins, if it were sensible of its own motion would think it proceeded from its own will, unless it felt what lashed it. And is a man any wiser when he runs to one place for a benefice, to another for a bargain, and troubles the world with writing errors and requiring answers, because he thinks he does it without other cause than his own will, and seeth not what are the lashings that cause that will?" And in the same way Leibnitz speaks of the magnetic needle: if it took pleasure in turning to the north, it would suppose itself to be acting independently, not knowing anything of the magnetic currents. 30 35 40

So far, then, all is, or at least may be, purely mechanical and necessitated, in

3. "In . . . lost"—*Paradise Lost*, Bk. II, line 561. 5. in scole—The quotation is from lines 412-15. 26. E . . . muove—And yet it moves, the phrase attributed to Galileo, after he had been required to recant his belief in the rotation of the earth about the sun. 27. Johnson—Cf. Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, ed. by G. B. Hill, Vol. II, p. 82 (year 1769). 30. Hobbes—Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), English philosopher.

spite of our feeling to the contrary. Kant solves the problem by taking the will out of the series of phenomena, and exempting it as a *noumenon* from the empirical laws of the phenomenal world,—from the conditions of cause and effect, as they exist in time. In this way he arrives at his “categorical imperative,” the supreme “ought,” which he recognizes as the moral legislator. His doctrine is satirically stated by Julius Müller thus: “Kant imputes to man, since he will make him entirely his own lawgiver, the contradictory task of separating himself from himself in order to subject himself to himself.” It is curious to see how Kant comes down virtually to the level of scepticism, if not of materialism, in the following explanatory note, which makes the text little better than a promise to pay without a signature:—

“The real morality of actions, their merit or demerit, and even that of our own conduct, is completely unknown to us. Our estimates can relate only to their empirical character. How much is the result of the action of free-will, how much is to be ascribed to nature and to blameless error, or to a happy constitution of temperament (*merito fortunæ*), no one can discover, nor, for this reason, determine with perfect justice.”

Our distinguished fellow-countryman, Mr. Hazard, follows Dr. Samuel Clarke in recognizing in man the power of determining his own effort, in the act of volition, without being first acted upon by any extrinsic power or force. Man is for him a “creative first cause,” an independent power, as truly creating the future in the sphere of the finite as God himself in the sphere of the infinite.

Physiological psychology has taken up the problem of the will as coming under the general laws of life. Cousin says of Hartley, that his “was the first attempt to join the study of intellectual man to that of physical man.” Whether this be strictly true or not, there is no doubt that Hartley gave a clear account of many of those automatic actions since grouped as belonging to the reflex function; and that, leaving out his hypothesis of vibrations, his account of the development of volition from automatism in the infant is among the earliest—if not the earliest—of the efforts to show the transition from involuntary to voluntary action. Johannes Müller followed in the same direction, and from the day when Galvani first noticed the twitching of a frog’s hind legs, the reflex function has been followed upward farther and farther until it appears in the “unconscious cerebration” of Dr. Carpenter, and the localization of speech and certain special movements in certain portions of the brain. Our physiological psychology is looking to the vivisectionists and the pathologists for help in finding the relation between the mental and moral faculties and the nervous centres; to learn from them the connection of living circuits and batteries;

1. Kant—Cf. note 12, p. 464. 2. *noumenon*—an object of rational intuition which cannot be known through the operations of the senses. 6. Müller—Julius Müller (1801-1878), German theologian (Lutheran). 16. *merito fortunæ*—by the accident (merit) of fortune. 18. Hazard—Rowland Gibson Hazard (1801-1888), manufacturer and philosopher. Holmes refers to his *Freedom of Mind in Willing*, 1864, et cetera. 19. Clarke—Dr. Samuel Clarke (1675-1729), English divine, is presumably meant. 25. Cousin—Victor Cousin (1792-1867), French eclectic philosopher. 25. Hartley—David Hartley (1705-1757), English metaphysician and psychologist, who anticipated some of the conclusions of physiological psychology. 33. Galvani—Luigi(?) Galvani (1737-1798), the discoverer of the phenomenon named after him. 35. Carpenter—presumably Dr. William Benjamin Carpenter (1813-1885), British physiologist.

possibly, not probably, to fix upon some particular portion of the brain where the will shall be found really enthroned, as Descartes vainly fancied that the soul is in the pineal gland.

As the study of the individual reduces his seemingly self-determined actions more and more to reflex action, to mechanism, in short, so we find that the study of mankind in communities, which constitutes history, resolves itself more and more into manifestations of the same reflex function. Why else does history "repeat itself," but that communities of men, like those of bees and ants, act in the same way under the same conditions? And in the last analysis, what are the *laws of human nature* but a generalized expression of the fact that every organ obeys its proper stimulus, and every act of volition follows its motive as inevitably as the weight falls if unsupported, and the spring recoils if bent?

The more we study the will in the way of analysis, the more strictly does it appear to be determined by the infinitely varied conditions of the individual. At the bottom of all these lies the moral "personal equation" of each human being. Suppose sin were always literally red,—as it is in the figurative expressions, "though your sins be as scarlet," "though they be red like crimson,"—in that case, it is very certain that many persons would be unable to distinguish sin from virtue, if we suppose virtue to have a color also, and that color to be green. There is good reason to believe that certain persons are born more or less completely blind to moral distinctions, as others are born color-blind. Many examples of this kind may be found in the "Psychologie Naturelle" of M. Prosper Despine, and our own criminal records would furnish notable instances of such imperfect natures. We are getting to be predestinarians as much as Edwards or Calvin was, only instead of universal corruption of nature derived from Adam, we recognize inherited congenital tendencies,—some good, some bad,—for which the subject of them is in no sense responsible. Edwards maintains that, in spite of his doctrine, "man is entirely, perfectly, and unspeakably different from a machine, in that he has reason and understanding, with a faculty of will, and so is capable of volition and choice: in that his will is guided by the dictates or views of his understanding; and in that his external actions and behavior, and in many respects also his thoughts and the exercises of his mind, are subject to his will." But all this only mystified his people, and the practical rural comment was in the well-known satirical saying, "You can and you can't, you shall and you shan't," and so forth,—the epigram that stung to death a hundred sermons based on the attempt to reconcile slavery to a depraved nature, on the one hand, with freedom to sin and responsibility for what could not be helped, on the other.

It is as hard to leave this subject without attempting to help in clearing it up as it is to pass a cairn without the desire of throwing a stone upon it. This impulse must excuse the following brief excursion.

In spite of the strongest-motive necessitarian doctrine, we do certainly have a feeling, amounting to a working belief, that we are free to choose before we have made our choice.

2. **Descartes**—René Descartes (1596-1650), French philosopher. 18. "though . . . crimson"—*Cf.* Isa. 1: 18. 24. **Despine**—M. Prosper Despine (1812-1892), French psychologist.

We have a sense of difficulty overcome by effort in many acts of choice.

We have a feeling in retrospect, amounting to a practical belief, that we could have left undone the things that we have done, and that we could have done the things that we ought to have done and did not do, and we accuse or  
5 else excuse ourselves accordingly.

Suppose this belief to be a self-deception, as we have seen that Hobbes and Leibnitz suggest it may be, "a deceiving of mankind by God himself," as Edwards accuses Lord Kaimes of maintaining, still this instinctive *belief* in the power of moral choice in itself constitutes a powerful motive. Our thinking  
10 ourselves free is the key to our whole moral nature. "Possumus quia posse videmur." We can make a difficult choice because we think we can. Happily, no reasoning can persuade us out of this belief; happily, indeed, for virtue rests upon it, education assumes and develops it, law pronounces its verdict and the ministers of the law execute its mandates on the strength of it. Make us out  
15 automata if you will, but we are automata which cannot help believing that they do their work well or ill as they choose, that they wind themselves up or let themselves run down by a power not in the weights or springs.

On the whole, we can afford to leave the question of liberty and necessity where Edwards leaves that of our belief in the existence of the material uni-  
20 verse:—

"Though we suppose that the Material Universe is absolutely dependent on Idea, yet we may speak in the old way and as properly and truly as ever."

"It is just all one as to any benefit or advantage, any end that we can suppose was proposed by the Creator, as if the Material Universe were existent in the same  
25 manner as is vulgarly thought."

And so we can say that, after all the arguments of the metaphysicians, all the experiments of the physiologists, all the uniform averages of statisticians, it is just all one as to any benefit or advantage as if a real self-determining power, and real responsibility for our acts of moral choice were existent in  
30 the same manner as is vulgarly thought.

The "Treatise on Original Sin" deals with that subject in the usual mediaeval style. As a specimen of what we may call theological sharp practice, the reader may take the following passage. Edwards is arguing against the supposition that the doctrine of original sin implies,—

35 "That nature must be corrupted by some *positive influence*,—'something by some means or other *infused* into the human nature; some *quality* or other, not from the *choice* of our minds, but like a *taint*, *tincture*, or *infection*, altering the natural constitution, faculties, and dispositions of our souls. That sin and evil dispositions are  
40 *IMPLANTED* in the foetus in the womb.' Whereas our doctrine neither implies nor infers any such thing. In order to account for a sinful corruption of nature, yea, a total native depravity of the heart of man, there is not the least need of supposing any evil *quality infused, implanted, or wrought* into the nature of man, by any positive cause, or influence whatsoever, either from God, or the creature; or of

8. Kaimes—Henry Home, Lord Kames (1696-1782), who published *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion* in 1751. 10-11. "Possumus . . . videmur"—"We are able to do something because we seem to be able to do something." 31. *Treatise—The Great Christian Doctrine of Original Sin Defended* . . . published in Boston, 1758.

supposing that man is conceived and born with a *fountain of evil* in his heart, such as is anything properly *positive*. I think a little attention to the nature of things will be sufficient to satisfy any impartial, considerate inquirer that the absence of positive good principles, and so the withholding of a special divine influence to impart and maintain those good principles—leaving the common natural principles of self-love, natural appetite, etc., to themselves, without the government of superior divine principles—will certainly be followed with the corruption, yea, the total corruption of the heart, without occasion for any *positive* influence at all: and that it was thus in fact that corruption of nature came on Adam, immediately on his fall, and comes on all his posterity, as sinning in him, and falling with him.”

The archbishop did not poison Ugolino and his boys,—he only withheld food from them. We will let Julius Müller expose the fallacy: “But even by giving this turn to the question, the idea cannot be avoided of an implantation of the moral corruption in human nature by a Divine causality, as directly contradicting the religious axiom that God cannot be the author of sin; for if from his Divine withdrawalment the origination of the corrupt nature necessarily follows, then the former is just a cause of the latter.” And to the same effect Professor Fisher allows that if God withdraws from the soul the grace without which it cannot but sin, “it is vain to urge that the act of God is of a negative character. . . . We do not see how the conclusion can be avoided that God is the author of sin.”

There are conceptions which are not only false, not only absurd, but which act as *disorganizing forces* in the midst of the thinking apparatus. They injure the texture of the mind as a habit of gross sin injures the type of the character. Such is the idea that a descendant of Adam can in any way be guilty or reckoned guilty of his sin. He may *suffer* for it, but that is his misfortune, and Justice should account to him for his suffering. “I could not help it” disarms vengeance and renders Tartarus a wanton luxury of cruelty. Edwards’s powerful intellect was filled with disorganizing conceptions, like that which makes all mankind sinners thousands of years before they were born.

A chief ground of complaint against Edwards is his use of language with reference to the future of mankind which shocks the sensibilities of a later generation. There is no need of going into all the plans and machinery of his “Inferno,” as displayed in his sermons. We can endure much in the mediæval verse of Dante which we cannot listen to in the comparatively raw and recent prose of Edwards. Mr. John Morley speaks in one of his Essays of “the horrors of what is perhaps the most frightful idea that has ever corroded human character,—the idea of eternal punishment.” Edwards has done his best to burn these horrors into the souls of men. A new organic and a new inorganic chemistry are brought into the laboratory where “the bulk of mankind” have been conveyed for vivisection or vivicombustion. The body is to possess the most exquisite sensibilities, is to be pervaded in every fibre and particle by the fire, and the fire is to be such that our lime-kilns and iron-furnaces would be refrigerators in comparison with the mildest of the torture-chambers.

11. Ugolino—Cf. Dante, *Inferno*, XXXIII. 18. Professor Fisher—George Park Fisher (1827-1909), professor of divinity in Yale College 1854-61; professor of ecclesiastical history, 1861-1901. 36. Morley—John Morley, Viscount Morley of Blackburn (1838-1923). 41. vivicombustion—burning alive.

Here the great majority of mankind are to pass the days and nights, if such terms are applicable to it, of a sleepless eternity. And all this apparatus of torture in full operation for "four thousand years," none of its victims warned of it or knowing anything about it until the "good news" came which brought  
 5 life and immortality to light,—an immortality of misery to "the bulk of mankind!"

But Edwards can be partially excused for doing violence to human feelings. It is better, perhaps, to confess that he was an imitator and a generous borrower than to allow him the credit of originality at the expense of his better human  
 10 attributes. Very good men are sometimes very forgetful. The Rev. Thomas Scott was a very good man, no doubt, in many respects, but that excellent old friend of the writer, the late learned and amiable Dr. Jenks, says in an Editor's Notice, to be found in the fifth volume of "The Comprehensive Commentary": "Nothing but such a diligent comparison as this work necessarily  
 15 required, of the labors of Henry and Scott, could have shown how greatly the latter was indebted to the former, especially in the Old Testament; and the lack of acknowledgment can be accounted for, and reconciled with principle, only by the consideration, that, possibly, if it had been made in every case where it was due, the work would have been less acceptable to persons of the  
 20 'establishment' whom the writer was desirous to influence favorably." Was ever an indictment drawn in language more tenderly modulated?

The Rev. Mr. Gillespie of Scotland, writing to Edwards, asks him, "Are the works of the great Mr. Boston known in your country, namely, the 'Fourfold State of Man'?" etc. To which Edwards replies: As to Mr. Boston's 'View of  
 25 the Covenant of Grace,' I have had some opportunity to examine it, and I confess I do not understand the scheme of thought presented in that book. I have read his 'Fourfold State of Man,' and liked it exceedingly well. I think in that he shows himself to be a truly great divine."

The Rev. Thomas Boston of Ettrick, Scotland,—an Ettrick shepherd very  
 30 different from "Jamie the Poeter," as James Hogg was called by his rustic neighbors,—may be remembered as one of the authors largely cited by Mr. Buckle in his arraignment of the barbarous theology of Scotland. He died in 1732, but the edition before the present writer, though without date, is evidently a comparatively recent one, and bears the impress, "Philadelphia: Presbyterian  
 35 Board of Publication."

Something of the mild surprise which honest old Dr. Jenks experienced when he found the property of Matthew Henry on the person of Thomas Scott may be felt by scrupulous individuals at recognizing a large part of the awful language, with the use of which Edwards is often reproached, as the  
 40 property of Thomas Boston. There is no mistaking the identity of many of

**11. Scott**—the Rev. Thomas Scott (1747-1821), British theologian, author of *The Holy Bible, with Notes*, 1788-92, 4 vols., often reprinted. **12. Jenks**—the Rev. William Jenks, author of *Comprehensive Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 1835-38, 6 vols. **15. Henry**—the Rev. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), author of *Exposition of the Old and New Testament*, 1710 ff., 6 vols. **22. Gillespie**—the Rev. Thomas Gillespie (1708-1774), Scotch divine. **23. Boston**—the Rev. Thomas Boston (1677-1732), Scotch Calvinist, minister at Ettrick, Scotland, 1707-32. **24-25. 'View . . . Grace'**—by the Rev. Thomas Boston, published 1734. **27. 'Fourfold . . . Man'**—*Human Nature in its Fourfold Estate* . . . Edinburgh, 1720. **32. Buckle**—Henry Thomas Buckle (1821-1862), author of *History of Civilization*, 3 vols., 1866, et cetera.

these expressions and images. Some, besides the Scriptural ones, may have been borrowed by both writers from a common source, but there is a considerable number which confess their parentage in the most unequivocal way. The argument for infinite punishment is the same; the fiery furnace the same; the hair suspending a living soul over it the same; reptiles and other odious images belong to both alike; infinite duration is described in similar language; the natural affections no longer exist; the mother will not pity the daughter in these flames, says Boston; parents, says Edwards, will sing hallelujahs as they see their children driven into the flames where they are to lie "roasting" (Edwards) and "roaring" (Boston) forever. This last word, it may be remarked, has an ill sound on the lips of a theologian; it looks as if he were getting out of the reach of human sympathies. It sounds very harshly when Cotton Mather says of a poor creature who was accidentally burned to death,—being, it seems, a little in liquor at the time, poor soul!—that she "went roaring out of one fire into another."

The true source of Edwards's Dante-like descriptions of his "Inferno" is but too obvious. Whatever claim to the character of a poet is founded on the lurid brilliancy of these passages may as well be reconsidered in the red light of Thomas Boston's rhetorical *autos-da-fé*. But wherever such pictures are found, at first or second hand, they are sure causes of unbelief, and liable to produce hatred not only of those who teach them, but of their whole system of doctrines. "Who are these cruel old clerical Torquemadas," ask the ungodly, "who are rolling the tortures of ourselves, our wives and children, under their tongues like a sweet morsel?" The denunciations of the pulpit came so near the execrations of the street in their language, and sometimes, it almost seemed, in their spirit, that many a "natural man" must have left his pew with the feeling in his heart embodied in a verse which the writer of this article found many years ago in a psalm-book in a Glasgow meeting-house where he was attending service, and has remembered ever since:—

"As cursing he like clothes put on,  
Into his bowels so  
Like water, and into his bones  
Like oil down let it go."

God forgive them! Doubtless many of them were as sincere and conscientious as the most zealous officers of the Holy Inquisition.

The title of the "Treatise on the Religious Affections" might naturally lead us to expect a large expression of those tenderer feelings with which Edwards was, no doubt, naturally endowed. But in point of fact, if a sermon of Edwards is like a nail driven through a human heart, this treatise is just what clinches it. It is a sad thought how many souls it must have driven to despair. For after having equipped the underground laboratory of "revenging justice" with a complete apparatus of torture, such as to think of suggests nothing but insanity, he fills the unhappy believer's mind with so many doubts and scruples

19. *autos-da-fé*—literally, "acts of faith," the term applied to the burning of heretics by the Spanish Inquisition. 22. *Torquemadas*—Tomás de Torquemada (1420-1498), the notorious general of the Spanish Inquisition. 36. "Treatise . . . Affections"—*A Treatise Concerning the Religious Affections*, published at Boston, 1746.



that many a pious Christian after reading it must have set himself down as a castaway. No warmth of feeling, no joy in believing, no love of religious exercises, no disposition to praise and glorify God, no assurance of faith, can be depended on as a "gracious affection;" for "as the Devil can counterfeit all the saving operations and graces of the Spirit of God, so he can counterfeit those operations that are preparatory to grace,"—in short, render every humble Christian so doubtful of his own state that "the peace which passeth all understanding" becomes a phrase without meaning. A discouraging statement, but not worse than Bunyan's:—

- 10 "A Christian man is never long at ease,  
When one fright's gone, another doth him seize."

As a general rule, we may venture to say that those writings of Edwards which are made up chiefly or to a great extent of Scriptural quotations are not very profitable reading. Such writings commonly deal with texts as the Chinese carvers do with the roots or other vegetable growths upon which they exercise their skill; they note certain fanciful resemblances in them, and add whatever of their own is necessary to complete the fantastic object they are going to shape. Besides, nothing is so dangerous to intellectual virility as to have a so-called infallible book to fall back upon: it was so with the students of Aristotle, with those of Hippocrates and Galen; and there is no sacred book in the world which has not crippled human souls, as all who remember the Scriptural justifications of Slavery will readily admit. There is therefore no need of taking up Edwards's exegetical treatises, which show him in his less robust aspect, as the Commentaries on the Prophecies are generally thought to show Sir Isaac Newton. Those who wish to learn what things the monstrous births arising from the conjunction of the sons of God with the daughters of men typify,—  
25 "The Church of Rome, that monstrous beast," among others,—those who are like to be edified by learning that when Elisha throws the stick into the water to recover the sunken axe-head, the stick represents Christ and the iron the soul of man; those who are ready to believe that the casting the hook and taking the first fish that came up and finding a piece of money in his mouth to be paid as tribute "signify that ministers of the gospel should receive of the temporal things of those that they preach the gospel to, whose souls they catch for Christ, for they are the fish of which gospel-ministers are the fishers,"—  
30 all such will do well to read Edwards's "Notes on the Bible."

Such were some of the beliefs of the great divine who stamped his personality and his doctrines on the New England theology of the last century. The story of his outward life is a short and melancholy one. In 1727 he was

7. peace . . . understanding—Cf. Phil. 4: 7. 10-11. "A . . . seize"—from a quatrain written under a woodcut first printed in the 13th ed. of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1692). 20. Hippocrates and Galen—Hippocrates (460-370 B.C.) and Galen (131-201 A.D.) open and close the ancient period of Greek medicine. 23. exegetical treatises—works designed to explain biblical texts and passages. 24. Commentaries—*Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse*, published in 1733. 26. sons . . . men—Cf. Gen. 6: 2. 28-29. Elisha . . . axe-head—Cf. II Kings 6: 5. 30-32. casting . . . tribute—Cf. Matt. 17: 27. 35. "Notes on the Bible"—not included in all editions of Edwards. The date of original publication is not clear.

settled at Northampton as the colleague of his grandfather, the venerable Solomon Stoddard, who died in 1729. Two great revivals of religion happened during his ministry. Of both these he has left printed accounts. The work entitled "Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England in 1740" is spoken of as having been, from the time of its first publication, to a very wide extent the common text-book of evangelical divines on the subject of which it treats. 5

The scenes described in his account remind one of the religious frenzies which seized upon multitudes in the Middle Ages. There are passages which look like the account of an epidemic, and passages almost as startling as one may read in Defoe's description of the Plague of London. Faintings, convulsions, utter prostration, trances, visions like those of delirium tremens, were common occurrences. Children went home from the religious meetings crying aloud through the streets. Some lost their reason; not enough, Edwards says, to cause alarm, unless we are disposed to gather up all we can to darken the work and set it forth in frightful colors. But he perhaps goes rather too far in saying so much as this: "We cannot determine how great a calamity distraction is, considered with all its consequences, and all that might have been consequent if the distraction had not happened; nor indeed whether, thus considered, it be any calamity at all, or whether it be not a mercy, by preventing some great sin," etc. One cannot help questioning whether a sense of the ludicrous did not relax his features as he wrote this last sentence. 10 15 20

While the work was at its height a poor man, overwhelmed with melancholy, made an attempt to cut his throat. Then a gentleman of good standing, who had been greatly concerned about the state of his soul, but who "durst entertain no hope concerning his own good estate," succeeded in taking his life in that way. "After this, multitudes in this and other towns seemed to have it strongly suggested to them and pressed upon them to do as this person had done." And pious persons, who had no special darkness or doubt about the goodness of their state, had it urged upon them as if somebody had spoken to them,— "Cut your own throat! Now is a good opportunity. Now! Now!" 25 30

Within a very short period there was a remarkable change; for in 1744 Edwards writes of the "very melancholy state of things in New England." "There is a vast alteration," he says, "within these two years. . . . Many high professors are fallen, some into gross immoralities, some into a rooted spiritual pride, enthusiasm, and an incorrigible wildness of behavior, some into a cold frame of mind, showing a great indifference to the things of religion." But many, and, he hopes, the greater part of those that were professed converts, were genuine ones, and he hopes and is persuaded that God will yet revive his work. 35 40

Seven years later, writing to the Rev. Mr. Erskine, he says there are many instances of perseverance in the subjects of the late revival; not so great a proportion, he thinks, as in Scotland. "I cannot say," he writes, "that the

2. Two . . . revivals—Cf. note 20, p. 860. 4. "Thoughts . . . 1740"—*Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England*. 11. Defoe's . . . London—Daniel Defoe, *A Journal of the Plague Year*, 1722. 41. Erskine—the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine (1680-1754). Scotch theologian.

greater part of supposed converts give reason, by their conversation, to suppose that they are true converts. The proportion may perhaps be more truly represented by the proportion of the blossoms on a tree which abide and come to mature fruit to the whole number of blossoms in the spring." After all, it is only fair to say that this is as much as could be claimed for the success of the sower who went forth to sow in the parable.

Twenty-four years the people of Northampton listened to the preaching of this great sermonizer, this mighty reasoner, this holy man. Difficulties arose between him and his people into the consideration of which we need not enter. It is enough to refer to the delicate subject of the evil ways which had crept in to an alarming extent among the young people who listened to his preaching, and the excitement caused in families by the fear of their exposure. But the final quarrel was on the question of admission of unconverted persons to the communion table, against which, though it had been advocated by his venerated colleague, he felt bound in conscience to declare himself.

There must have been something more, one must believe, than these causes to account for the final vote which separated him from his charge. For when it was publicly put to the people "whether they still insisted on Mr. Edwards's dismission from the pastoral office over them," a great majority (above two hundred against twenty) voted for his dismission.

It is impossible that people of ordinary sensibilities should have listened to his torturing discourses without becoming at last sick of hearing of infinite horrors and endless agonies. It came very hard to kind-hearted persons to believe that the least sin exposed a creature God had made to such exorbitant penalties. Edwards's whole system had too much of the character of the savage people by whom the wilderness had so recently been tenanted. There was revenge—"revenging *justice*" was what he called it—insatiable, exhausting its ingenuity in contriving the most exquisite torments; there was the hereditary hatred glaring on the babe in its cradle; there were the suffering wretch and the pleased and shouting lookers-on. Every natural grace of disposition; all that had once charmed in the sweet ingenuousness of youth, in the laughing gayety of childhood, in the winning helplessness of infancy; every virtue that Plato had dreamed of, every character that Plutarch had drawn,—all were branded with the hot iron which left the blackened inscription upon them, signifying that they were accursed of God,—the damning word *nature*.

With all his powers, his virtues, his eloquence, it must have been more than people could do to stand being called "vile insects," "filthy worms," "firebrands of hell," and other such hard names. But what must have been the feeling of Northampton mothers when they read what Edwards said about their darlings! It seems that there had been complaints against some preachers for frightening poor innocent children, as he says, with talk of hell-fire and eternal damnation. But if those who complain really believe what they profess to, they show, he thinks, a great deal of weakness and inconsideration. Then follow the words which the writer once quoted on a public occasion, which

6. *parable*—The reference is to Matt. 13: 3-9. 33. *Plutarch*—Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* are intended as ethical examples. 35. *nature*—that is, unregenerate.

use of them brought him a letter from a much-respected orthodox clergyman, asking where they could be found. It is not strange that he asked, for he might have looked in vain for them in the ten-volume edition of Edwards's works, published under the editorship of his own predecessor, grandson of Edwards, the Reverend Sereno E. Dwight, or the English reprint of that edition. But the editor of the edition of the work on "Revivals," published in New York in 1832, did not think it necessary, perhaps honest, to omit the passage, and this is the way it reads:—

"As innocent as children seem to be to us, yet, if they are out of Christ, they are not so in God's sight, but are young vipers, and are infinitely more hateful than vipers, and are in a most miserable condition, as well as grown persons; and they are naturally very senseless and stupid, being *born as the wild ass's colt*, and need much to awaken them."

Is it possible that Edwards read the text mothers love so well, "Suffer little vipers to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God"?

The truth is, Edwards belonged in Scotland, to which he owed so much, and not to New England. And the best thing that could have happened, if it had happened early enough, both for him and for his people, was what did happen after a few years of residence at Stockbridge, where he went after leaving Northampton,—namely, his transfer to the presidency of the college at Princeton, New Jersey, where the Scotch theological thistle has always flourished, native or imported,—a stately flower at present, with fewer prickles and livelier bloom than in the days of Thomas Boston, the Ettrick shepherd of old. Here he died before assuming the duties of his office; died in faith and hope,—hope for himself, at any rate, perhaps, as we shall see, with less despairing views for the future of his fellow-creatures than his printed works have shown us.

The reader may have patience left for a few general remarks.

The spiritual nature seems to be a natural endowment, like a musical ear. Those who have no ear for music must be very careful how they speak about that mysterious world of thrilling vibrations which are idle noises to them. And so the true saint can be entirely appreciated only by saintly natures. Yet the least spiritual man can hardly read those remarkable "Resolutions" of Edwards without a reverence akin to awe for his purity and elevation. His beliefs and his conduct we need not hesitate to handle freely. We have lately seen unquestioning and unquestioned "faith" ending in child-murder. The spiritual nature is no safeguard against error of doctrine or practice; indeed, it may be doubted whether a majority of all the spiritual natures in the world would be found in Christian countries.

Edwards's system seems, in the light of to-day, to the last degree barbaric, mechanical, materialistic, pessimistic. If he had lived a hundred years later, and

6. editor . . . "Revivals"—published with *A Faithful Narrative* in 1832. The editor is not known. 14-16. "Suffer . . . God"—*Cf.* Mark 10:14. 22. Scotch theological thistle—that is, Calvinism in particular. 34. "Resolutions"—*Cf.* p. 39. 42. mechanical—mechanistic.

breathed the air of freedom, he could not have written with such old-world barbarism as we find in his volcanic sermons. We can realize in our day the truth of Montesquieu's saying, "If the punishments of the Orientals horrify humanity, the reason is that the despot who ordains them is above all laws.

5 It is not so in republics, wherein the laws are always mild, because he who makes them is himself a subject." We cannot have self-government and humane laws without its reacting on our view of the Divine administration. It was not so strange that Thomas Boston, from whose livid pages Edwards derived much of his inspiration, should put his hearers on the rack of his depraved imagination, for he could remember the days when torture was used in Scotland to  
10 extract evidence. He may have heard the story told in his nursery,—for he was a boy six years old at the time,—how they had been applying the thumb-screws for an hour and a half to Principal William Carstairs, at Holyrood Palace, under the direction of the Privy Council.

15 Again, what can be more mechanical than the God of all gods he contrived,—or accepted,—under the name of *Justice*,—a piece of iron machinery which would have held back the father's arms stretching out to embrace his son, and shed the blood of the prodigal, instead of that of the fatted calf?

What can be more utterly materialistic than to attach the idea of sinfulness  
20 and responsibility, and liability to eternal suffering in consequence, to a little organic bundle, with no more knowledge of its relations to the moral world than a marsupial embryo in the maternal pouch has of its geographical position?

And what pessimism that ever entered the mind of man has gone farther than that which taxed the imagination to the utmost for its horrors, and  
25 declared that these were but the faintest image of what was reserved for the bulk of mankind?

There is reason to fear that Edwards has not been fairly dealt with in all respects. We have seen that in one instance expressions, which it was probably thought would give offence, were omitted by his editor. A far more important  
30 matter remains to be cleared up. The writer is informed on unquestionable authority that there is or was in existence a manuscript of Edwards in which his views appear to have undergone a great change in the direction of Arianism, or of Sabellianism, which is an old-fashioned Unitarianism, or at any rate show a defection from his former standard of orthodoxy, and which its custodians,  
35 thinking it best to be wise as serpents in order that they might continue harmless as doves, have considered it their duty to withhold from the public. If any of our friends at Andover can inform us what are the facts about this manuscript, such information would be gratefully received by many inquirers, who would be rejoiced to know that so able and so good a man lived to be

3. Montesquieu—See note 2, p. 849. 12-14. thumb-screws . . . Privy Council—William Carstairs (1649-1715), Scotch divine, involved in the so-called Rye House Plot, and, though arrested in England, removed to Edinburgh because English custom did not permit him to be tortured. 17-18. father's . . . calf—*Cf.* Luke 15: 11-32. 22. marsupial embryo—embryo of a kangaroo. 31. manuscript—For a list of Edwards' manuscripts see the bibliography in Vol. I of the *Cambridge History of American Literature*. 32. Arianism—Arianism denies the consubstantiality of God the Father and God the Son. 33. Sabellianism—Sabellianism denies the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity. 35-36. serpents . . . doves—*Cf.* Matt. 10: 16. 37. Andover—Andover Theological Seminary, founded 1807, originally established to advance strict Calvinist theology.

emancipated from the worse than heathen conceptions which had so long enchained his powerful, but crippled understanding.

Much that was morbid in Edwards's theology was doubtless owing to ill health, from which he was an habitual sufferer, a melancholic temperament, and the habit of constant moral introspection, of which his diary gives abundant evidence. Mr. Galton, in his work on "Heredity," says, after having looked up the history of a good many clergymen: "A gently complaining and fatigued spirit is that in which evangelical divines are very apt to pass their days. . . . There is an air of invalidism about most religious biographies." And Taine, in his notice of the poet Cowper, speaks of the "profound dejection, gloomy and continued despair, the horrible malady of the nerves and the soul which leads to suicide, *Puritanism*, and madness."

Perpetual self-inspection leads to spiritual hypochondriasis. If a man insists on counting his pulse twenty times a day, on looking at his tongue every hour or two, on taking his temperature with the thermometer morning and evening, on weighing himself three or four times a week, he will soon find himself in a doubtful state of bodily health. It is just so with those who are perpetually counting their spiritual pulse, taking the temperature of their feelings, weighing their human and necessarily imperfect characters against the infinite perfections placed in the other scale of the balance.

These melancholy diarists remind one of children in their little gardens, planting a bean or a lupine-seed in the morning, and pulling it up in the evening to see if it has sprouted or how it is getting on. The diarist pulls his character up by the roots every evening, and finds the soil of human nature,—the humus,—out of which it must needs grow, clinging to its radicles. Then he mourns over himself as did the saintly Brainard as "inexpressibly loathsome and defiled," calling himself so vile "that [he] dared not look anybody in the face," and soon becomes a fit subject for medical treatment, having lost all wholesome sense of the world about him and of his own personality.

Jeremy Taylor has well said of godly fear: "But this so excellent grace is soon abused in the best and most tender spirits; in those who are softened by nature and religion, by infelicities or cares, by sudden accidents or a sad soul; and the Devil, observing that fear, like a spare diet, starves the fevers of lust and quenches the flames of hell, endeavors to heighten this abstinence so much as to starve the man, and break the spirit into timorousness and scruple, sadness and unreasonable tremblings, credulity and trifling observation, suspicion and false accusations of God."

The fact that, while Edwards's name is used as a war-cry, and inscribed on the labarum of the old bow-and-arrow controversialists, his works are neglected, his doctrines either passed over in silence or repudiated, shows that his great powers were under some misguiding influence. The truth is that the whole system of beliefs which came in with the story of the "fall of man," the curse

6. Galton—Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911), British founder of eugenics. *Hereditary Genius* appeared in 1865. 9. Taine—Hippolyte Adolphe Taine (1828-1893), whose *History of English Literature* (1864) has been widely read. 13. hypochondriasis—morbid depression. 26. Brainard—the Rev. David Brainard (1718-1747), missionary to the Indians, whose life Edwards published in 1749. 30. Taylor—Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667), famous English preacher and prose writer. 39. labarum—(1) a Roman military standard; (2) an ecclesiastical banner.

of the father of the race conveyed by natural descent to his posterity, the casting of the responsibility of death and all the disorders of creation upon the unfortunate being who found them a part of the arrangements of the universe when he first made his appearance, is gently fading out of enlightened human intelligence, and we are hardly in a condition to realize what a tyranny it once exerted over many of the strongest minds. We no longer pretend to hold our primeval ancestor, whoever he may have been, responsible for the entrance of death into the world, for the teeth of the carnivora, for the venom of the snake, for the battles of the megatherium, the maladies of the ichthyosaurus, the indispositions of the pterodactyl, the extinction of the strange creatures that left their footprints on the shores of the Connecticut, where we have been finding the tracks of a fossil theology not less monstrous than its predecessors in the material world. Astronomy, Geology, Ethnology, and the comparative study of Oriental religions have opened the way; and now Anthropology has taken hold of the matter, and, leaving aside all those questions which by searching no man can find out, must deal with the problem which Asiatic tradition and its interpreters have failed to solve. But in the mean time many lessons are to be learned from the careful study of a man, who, as Mr. Bancroft says, "sums up the old theology of New England and is the fountain-head of the new."

What better comment can be made on his misdirected powers than his own remark: "A person may have a strong reason and yet not a good reason. He may have a strength of mind to drive an argument and yet not have even balances."

As we picture the scenes he described, the Divine ingenuity fitting the body and soul for the extremity of suffering, and providing new physical and chemical laws to carry torture beyond our power of imagination, friends looking on pleased, parents rejoicing and singing hallelujahs as they see their children "turned away and beginning to enter into the great furnace" where they are to "roast" forever, all natural affections utterly gone,—can we find anywhere a more striking illustration of his own words? He is speaking of the self-torturing worship of the heathen: "How powerful must be the delusions of the human mind, and how strong the tendency of the heart to carry them such a length and so to overcome the tenderest feelings of human nature!"

There is no sufficient reason for attacking the motives of a man so saintly in life, so holy in aspirations, so patient, so meek, so laborious, so thoroughly in earnest in the work to which his life was given. But after long smothering in the sulphurous atmosphere of his thought one cannot help asking, Was this or anything like this,—is this or anything like this,—the accepted belief of any considerable part of Protestantism? If so, we must say with Bacon, "It were better to have no opinion of God at all than such an opinion as is unworthy of Him." A "natural man" is better than an unnatural theologian. It is a less violence to our nature to deify protoplasm than it is to diabolize the Deity.

The practical effect of Edwards's teachings about the relations of God and man has bequeathed a lesson not to be forgotten. A revival in which the majority of the converts fell away; nervous disorders of all sorts, insanity,

8. *carnivora*—flesh-eating animals. 9-10. *megatherium* . . . *ichthyosaurus* . . . *pterodactyl*—extinct animals known only by their fossil remains.

suicide, among the rewards of his eloquence; Religion dressed up in fine phrases and made much of, while Morality, her Poor Relation, was getting hard treatment at the hands of the young persons who had grown up under the reign of terror of the Northampton pulpit; alienation of the hearts of his people to such an extent as is rarely seen in the bitterest quarrels between pastor and flock,—if this was a successful ministry, what disasters would constitute a failure? 5

“Never,” says Professor Fisher, “was there a louder call for the utmost candor and fairness in dealing with the difficulties and objections of inquiring minds, whose perplexities find little relief in much of the current and traditional teaching.” 10

At the bottom of these difficulties lies the doctrine of the “fall of man.” Does not the present state of our knowledge compel us to consider the narrative on which this is based as a disproved, or at the best an unproved story, and to consign it, with the cohering doctrine of sin and all other inferences dependent upon it, to the nebulous realm of Asiatic legends, the vehicles of many different religions, each with its mingled truths and errors? The change of opinion is coming quite rapidly enough: we should hardly dare to print our doubts and questions if we did not know that they will be read by few, made light of by some of these, summarily answered and dismissed by others, and have no apparent immediate effect on the great mass of beliefs. For what we want in the religious and in the political organisms is just that kind of vital change which takes place in our bodies,—interstitial disintegration and reintegration; and one of the legitimate fears of our time is that science, which Sainte-Beuve would have us think has destroyed faith, will be too rapid in its action on beliefs. So the doubter should be glad that he is doubted; the rationalist respect the obduracy of the dogmatist; and all the mighty explosives with which the growth of knowledge has furnished us should be used rather to clear the path for those who come after us than to shatter the roofs which have long protected and still protect so many of our humble and trusting fellow-creatures. 20 25 31

23. *interstitial*—within the tissues. 25. *Sainte-Beuve*—Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve (1804-1869), the most influential French critic of his time.



# HENRY DAVID THOREAU

1817-1862

- 1817 July 12, born at Concord, Massachusetts, the second son of John and Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau.
- 1818-1823 Lived mainly at Chelmsford; first went to school in Boston.
- 1823-1833 Grew up in Concord village, attending local schools, including the "Academy." Well grounded in the classics.
- 1833-1837 At Harvard College, graduating in August, 1837. In the vacations he taught school or "peddled." During this period Thoreau began his journals, though not systematically until October, 1837.
- 1837 Association with Emerson began.
- 1838 April 11, first lectured at Concord, beginning a lecture career of twenty years. Refused to pay church taxes. June, taught at the Concord "Academy."
- 1839 August 31, trip on the Concord and Merrimac rivers with his brother John.
- 1840 July, essay on Persius printed in the *Dial*. Thoreau contributed regularly during the four years of the existence of this magazine.
- 1841 April, lived in Emerson's house (to 1843).
- 1842 February, brother John died.
- 1843 Spring, tutor to William Emerson's children on Staten Island. Made the acquaintance of Horace Greeley, his "Maecenas."
- 1845 March, retired to Walden Pond, where he lived until September 6, 1847. During this period Thoreau spent a night in jail for his refusal to pay taxes.
- 1846 Visited Maine woods (again in 1853 and 1857).
- 1847 March and April, essay on Carlyle published in *Graham's Magazine*. Acquaintance with Agassiz ripened.
- 1849 "Essay on Civil Disobedience" published in *Aesthetic Papers*. *A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers* published. Thoreau's sister Helen died. In the autumn Thoreau made his excursion to Cape Cod with a friend.
- 1850 September, visit to Canada with Ellery Channing.
- 1853 Essays which later became *A Yankee in Canada* published in *Putnam's Magazine*.
- 1854 *Walden* published. Thoreau delivered at an antislavery meeting in Framingham his speech "Slavery in Massachusetts."
- 1855 Some of the papers which later became *Cape Cod* published in *Putnam's Magazine*. Thoreau's health failing.
- 1859 February, Thoreau's father died. October, John Brown and Thoreau both appeared at an antislavery meeting in Concord. November, Thoreau delivered his plea for Brown at Tremont Temple, Boston.
- 1861 Trip west (to Minnesota) in search of health unsuccessful.
- 1862 May 6, Thoreau died at Concord.
- 1863 *Excursions* published (volume of essays from magazines).

- 1864 *The Maine Woods* published; also *Cape Cod* (1863).  
 1866 *A Yankee in Canada* published.  
 1881-1892 Thoreau's journals published as *Early Spring in Massachusetts* (1881); *Summer* (1884); *Winter* (1888); *Autumn* (1892).  
 1895 *Poems of Nature* published.

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Perhaps the best way to approach Thoreau is to read the poems of Robert Frost, especially one so characteristic of the New England point of view as that entitled "New Hampshire." Thoreau has been labeled many times—poet-naturalist, transcendentalist, cosmic Yankee, bachelor of nature, social rebel—but the labels have a habit of slipping off. The reader of Robert Frost soon learns to expect from the Yankee elusive silences, Puck-like irony, and a whimsical acceptance of points of view which the New Englander has not the slightest intention of keeping to. So it is that Thoreau, quicksilver-like, eludes our pains; and, like the loon he describes in *Walden*, about the time he seems definitely cornered he slips under water and comes up again, laughing, rods away from the reader.

It is surprising, in view of the slender quantity of Thoreau's work published in his lifetime, how definite is the impression which he has made on American literature and on the world. The twenty-volume edition of his writings includes fourteen volumes of his journal, leaving but six of more formal publication; and of these six volumes, half the material is secondary and tangential. Nevertheless, Thoreau remains a major figure, partly because of the firm integrity of his personality, and partly because his philosophy, or at any rate his habit of mind, remains a perpetual challenge to sophisticated man.

It is possible to distinguish three general stages in the interpretation of Thoreau. The earlier point of view is that he was primarily a "poet-naturalist," and is that of Emerson and Lowell. After the publication of Sanborn's life there was a tendency to see in Thoreau the transcendentalist. Latterly, it is the social and economic rebellion of Thoreau which has most engaged attention, Thoreau's life and utterances being interpreted as ironic exposures of the futility of machine-made civilization and the tyranny of the state. What the next approach will be no one can guess,

but that there will be another fashion in interpretation is sure. Meantime, every reader has the task—and the riddle—of deciding what Thoreau in his essence really was. Perhaps, like Rousseau, he is destined to be all things to all men—though it seems certain that capitalism will never quite claim him for its own.

## A WINTER WALK

This sketch was originally published in the *Dial* (Vol. IV, No. 2) for October, 1843, and collected into the posthumous volume of *Excursions* (1863). In *The Personality of Thoreau*, Boston, 1901, F. B. Sanborn prints a poem and a prose paragraph which, he says, were omitted from the *Dial* version. Thoreau's sister Sophia seems to have prepared the manuscripts for *Excursions*; in that volume the text of "A Winter Walk" differs in a number of particulars from the *Dial* text. The volume does not indicate the authority for the changes made; and though these have been incorporated in the collected editions of Thoreau, the present editors have preferred to keep the *Dial* text as being the last to appear in Thoreau's lifetime, pending more light on the authority of the *Excursions* version.

THE WIND has gently murmured through the blinds, or puffed with feathery softness against the windows, and occasionally sighed like a summer zephyr lifting the leaves along the livelong night. The meadow mouse has slept in his snug gallery in the sod, the owl has sat in a hollow tree in the depth of the swamp, the rabbit, the squirrel, and the fox have all been housed. The watch-dog has lain quiet on the hearth, and the cattle have stood silent in their stalls. The earth itself has slept, as it were its first, not its last sleep, save when some street-sign or wood-house door has faintly creaked upon its hinge, cheering forlorn nature at her midnight work. The only sound awake twixt Venus and Mars,—advertising us of a remote inward warmth, a divine cheer and fellowship, where gods are met together, but where it is very bleak for men to stand. But while the earth has slumbered, all the air has been alive with feathery flakes descending, as if some northern Ceres reigned, showering her silvery grain over all the fields.

We sleep and at length awake to the still reality of a winter morning. The snow lies warm as cotton or down upon the window-sill; the broadened sash and frosted panes admit a dim and private light, which enhances the snug cheer within. The stillness of the morning is impressive. The floor creaks under our feet as we move toward the window to look abroad through some clear space over the fields. We see the roofs stand under their snow burden. From the eaves and fences hang stalactites of snow, and in the yard stand stalagmites covering some concealed core. The trees and shrubs rear white arms to the sky on every side, and where were walls and fences, we see fantastic forms stretching in frolic gambols across the dusky landscape, as if nature had strewn her fresh designs over the fields by night as models for man's art.

Silently we unlatch the door, letting the drift fall in, and step abroad to face

10. Venus and Mars—the planets. 10. advertising—informing. 14. Ceres—the Roman goddess of the grain. 21. stalactites—hanging deposits of calcium carbonate in a cave, in shape resembling an icicle. 21. stalagmites—deposits like an inverted stalactite formed on the floor of a cavern by the dripping of calcareous water.

the cutting air. Already the stars have lost some of their sparkle, and a dull, leaden mist skirts the horizon. A lurid brazen light in the east proclaims the approach of day, while the western landscape is dim and spectral still, and clothed in a sombre Tartarian light, like the shadowy realms. They are Infernal sounds only that you hear;—the crowing of cocks, the barking of dogs, the chopping of wood, the lowing of kine, all seem to come from Pluto's barn-yard and beyond the Styx;—not for any melancholy they suggest, but their twilight bustle is too solemn and mysterious for earth. The recent tracks of the fox or otter, in the yard, remind us that each hour of the night is crowded with events, and the primeval nature is still working and making tracks in the snow. Opening the gate, we tread briskly along the lone country road, crunching the dry and crisped snow under our feet, or aroused by the sharp clear creak of the wood-sled, just starting for the distant market, from the early farmer's door, where it has lain the summer long, dreaming amid the chips and stubble. For through the drifts and powdered windows, we see the farmer's early candle, like a paled star, emitting a lonely beam, as if some severe virtue were at its matins there. And one by one the smokes begin to ascend from the chimneys amid the trees and snows.

The sluggish smoke curls up from some deep dell,  
 The stiffened air exploring in the dawn,  
 And making slow acquaintance with the day;  
 Delaying now upon its heavenward course,  
 In wreathed loiterings dallying with itself,  
 With as uncertain purpose and slow deed,  
 As its half-wakened master by the hearth,  
 Whose mind still slumbering and sluggish thoughts  
 Have not yet swept into the onward current  
 Of the new day;—and now it streams afar,  
 The while the chopper goes with step direct,  
 And mind intent to swing the early axe.  
 First in the dusky dawn he sends abroad  
 His early scout, his emissary, smoke,  
 The earliest, latest pilgrim from the roof,  
 To feel the frosty air, inform the day;  
 And while he crouches still beside the hearth,  
 Nor musters courage to unbar the door,  
 It has gone down the glen with the light wind,  
 And o'er the plain unfurled its venturous wreath,  
 Draped the treetops, loitered upon the hill,  
 And warmed the pinions of the early bird;  
 And now, perchance, high in the crispy air,  
 Has caught sight of the day o'er the earth's edge,  
 And greets its master's eye at his low door,  
 As some refulgent cloud in the upper sky.

We hear the sound of wood-chopping at the farmers' doors, far over the frozen earth, the baying of the housedog, and the distant clarion of the cock.

4. **Tartarian**—from Tartarus, a synonym for Hades. 7. **Styx**—the infernal river which all souls must cross into the lower world.

The thin and frosty air conveys only the finer particles of sound to our ears, with short and sweet vibrations, as the waves subside soonest on the purest and lightest liquids, in which gross substances sink to the bottom. They come clear and bell-like, and from a greater distance in the horizon, as if there were  
 5 fewer impediments than in summer to make them faint and ragged. The ground is sonorous, like seasoned wood, and even the ordinary rural sounds are melodious, and the jingling of the ice on the trees is sweet and liquid. There is the least possible moisture in the atmosphere, all being dried up, or congealed, and it is of such extreme tenuity and elasticity, that it becomes a  
 10 source of delight. The withdrawn and tense sky seems groined like the aisles of a cathedral, and the polished air sparkles as if there were crystals of ice floating in it. Those who have resided in Greenland tell us, that, when it freezes, "the sea smokes like burning turf-land, and a fog or mist arises, called frosts-  
 15 smoke," which "cutting smoke frequently raises blisters on the face and hands, and is very pernicious to the health." But this pure stinging cold is an elixir to the lungs, and not so much a frozen mist as a crystallized mid-summer haze, refined and purified by cold.

The sun at length rises through the distant woods, as if with the faint clashing swinging sound of cymbals, melting the air with his beams, and with  
 20 such rapid steps the morning travels, that already his rays are gilding the distant western mountains. Meanwhile we step hastily along through the powdery snow, warmed by an inward heat, enjoying an Indian summer still, in the increased glow of thought and feeling. Probably if our lives were more conformed to nature, we should not need to defend ourselves against her heats and  
 25 colds, but find her our constant nurse and friend, as do plants and quadrupeds. If our bodies were fed with pure and simple elements, and not with a stimulating and heating diet, they would afford no more pasture for cold than a leafless twig, but thrive like the trees, which find even winter genial to their expansion.

The wonderful purity of nature at this season is a most pleasing fact. Every  
 30 decayed stump and moss-grown stone and rail, and the dead leaves of autumn, are concealed by a clean napkin of snow. In the bare fields and tinkling woods, see what virtue survives. In the coldest and bleakest places, the warmest charities still maintain a foot-hold. A cold and searching wind drives away all contagion, and nothing can withstand it but what has a virtue in it; and accordingly, what-  
 35 ever we meet with in cold and bleak places, as the tops of mountains, we respect for a sort of sturdy innocence, a Puritan toughness. All things beside seem to be called in for shelter, and what stays out must be part of the original frame of the universe, and of such valor as God himself. It is invigorating to breathe the cleansed air. Its greater fineness and purity are visible to the eye, and we  
 40 would fain stay out long and late, that the gales may sigh through us too, as through the leafless trees, and fit us for the winter:—as if we hoped so to borrow some pure and steadfast virtue, which will stead us in all seasons.

At length, we have reached the edge of the woods, and shut out the gadding town. We enter within their covert as we go under the roof of a

12. resided in Greenland—This is possibly a reference to Sir John Ross's *Narrative of a Second Voyage in Search of a North-West Passage . . . 1829 . . . 1833*, London, 1835, but in the absence of an index to the volume it is impossible to locate the passage quoted.

cottage, and cross its threshold, all ceiled and banked up with snow. They are glad and warm still, and as genial and cheery in winter as in summer. As we stand in the midst of the pines, in the flickering and checkered light which straggles but little way into their maze, we wonder if the towns have ever heard their simple story. It seems to us that no traveller has ever explored them, and notwithstanding the wonders which science is elsewhere revealing every day, who would not like to hear their annals? Our humble villages in the plain, are their contribution. We borrow from the forest the boards which shelter, and the sticks which warm us. How important is their evergreen to the winter, that portion of the summer which does not fade, the permanent year, the unwithered grass. Thus simply, and with little expense of altitude, is the surface of the earth diversified. What would human life be without forests, those natural cities? From the tops of mountains they appear like smoothshaven lawns, yet whither shall we walk but in this taller grass?

There is a slumbering subterranean fire in nature which never goes out, and which no cold can chill. It finally melts the great snow, and in January or July is only buried under a thicker or thinner covering. In the coldest day it flows somewhere, and the snow melts around every tree. This field of winter rye, which sprouted late in the fall, and now speedily dissolves the snow, is where the fire is very thinly covered. We feel warmed by it. In the winter, warmth stands for all virtue, and we resort in thought to a trickling rill, with its bare stones shining in the sun, and to warm springs in the woods, with as much eagerness as rabbits and robins. The steam which rises from swamps and pools is as dear and domestic as that of our own kettle. What fire could ever equal the sunshine of a winter's-day, when the meadow mice come out by the wallsides, and the chickadee lisps in the defiles of the wood? The warmth comes directly from the sun, and is not radiated from the earth, as in summer; and when we feel his beams on our backs as we are treading some snowy dell, we are grateful as for a special kindness, and bless the sun which has followed us into that by-place.

This subterranean fire has its altar in each man's breast, for in the coldest day, and on the bleakest hill, the traveler cherishes a warmer fire within the folds of his cloak than is kindled on any hearth. A healthy man, indeed, is the complement of the seasons, and in winter, summer is in his heart. There is the south. Thither have all birds and insects migrated, and around the warm springs in his breast are gathered the robin and the lark.

In this glade covered with bushes of a year's growth, see how the silvery dust lies on every seared leaf and twig, deposited in such infinite and luxurious forms as by their very variety atone for the absence of color. Observe the tiny tracks of mice around every stem, and the triangular tracks of the rabbit. A pure elastic heaven hangs over all, as if the impurities of the summer sky, refined and shrunk by the chaste winter's cold, had been winnowed from the heavens upon the earth.

Nature confounds her summer distinctions at this season. The heavens seem to be nearer the earth. The elements are less reserved and distinct. Water turns to ice, rain to snow. The day is but a Scandinavian night. The winter is an arctic summer.

How much more living is the life that is in nature, the furred life which still survives the stinging nights, and, from amidst fields and woods covered with frost and snow, sees the sun rise.

"The foodless wilds  
Pour forth their brown inhabitants."

5

The grey-squirrel and rabbit are brisk and playful in the remote glens, even on the morning of the cold Friday. Here is our Lapland and Labrador, and for our Esquimaux and Knistenaux, Dog-ribbed Indians, Novazemblaites, and Spitzbergeners, are there not the ice-cutter and wood-chopper, the fox, musk-  
10 rat, and mink?

Still, in the midst of the arctic day, we may trace the summer to its retreats, and sympathize with some contemporary life. Stretched over the brooks, in the midst of the frost-bound meadows, we may observe the submarine cottages of the caddice-worms, the larvae of the Plicipennes; their small cylind-  
15 drical caves built around themselves, composed of flags, sticks, grass, and withered leaves, shells, and pebbles, in form and color like the wrecks which strew the bottom,—now drifting along over the pebbly bottom, now whirling in tiny eddies and dashing down steep falls, or sweeping rapidly along with the current, or else swaying to and fro at the end of some grass-blade or root. Anon  
20 they will leave their sunken habitations, and crawling up the stems of plants, floating on the surface, like gnats, or perfect insects, henceforth flutter over the surface of the water, or sacrifice their short lives in the flame of our candles at evening. Down yonder little glen the shrubs are drooping under their burden, and the red alder-berries contrast with the white ground. Here are the  
25 marks of a myriad feet which have already been abroad. The sun rises as proudly over such a glen, as over the valley of the Seine or the Tiber, and it seems the residence of a pure and self-subsistent valor, such as they never witnessed; which never knew defeat nor fear. Here reign the simplicity and purity of a primitive age, and a health and hope far remote from towns and cities.  
30 Standing quite alone, far in the forest, while the wind is shaking down snow from the trees, and leaving the only human tracks behind us, we find our reflections of a richer variety than the life of cities. The chickadee and nut-hatch are more inspiring society than the statesmen and philosophers, and we shall return to these last, as to more vulgar companions. In this lonely glen, with its  
35 brook draining the slopes, its creased ice and crystals of all hues, where the spruces and hemlocks stand up on either side, and the rush and sere wild oats in the rivulet itself, our lives are more serene and worthy to contemplate.

As the day advances, the heat of the sun is reflected by the hillsides, and we hear a faint but sweet music, where flows the rill released from its fetters,

4-5. "The foodless . . . inhabitants"—from the section "Winter" of *The Seasons* by James Thomson. 8. **Esquimaux** . . . **Dog-ribbed Indians**—The Knistenaux were a tribe of Cree Indians living in the Arctic portions of Canada, where the Dog-ribs also lived. The three proper nouns suggest that Thoreau had been reading travel books by Sir Alexander M'Kenzie, John (later Sir John) Franklin, or William E. Parry, all of whom refer to one or another of these aborigines. See lines 12-15, p. 882. 8. **Novazemblaites**—inhabitants of Nova Zembla, a group of islands in the Arctic Ocean, belonging to Russia. 9. **Spitzbergeners**—inhabitants of an archipelago in the Arctic Ocean north of Norway. 14. **Plicipennes**—caddis-flies. 15. **caves**—*Miscel-lanies* reads "cases."

and the icicles are melting on the trees; and the nut-hatch and partridge are heard and seen. The south wind melts the snow at noon, and the bare ground appears with its withered grass and leaves, and we are invigorated by the perfume which exhales from it, as by the scent of strong meats.

Let us go into this deserted woodman's hut, and see how he has passed the long winter nights and the short and stormy days. For here man has lived under this south hill-side, and it seems a civilized and public spot. We have such associations as when the traveller stands by the ruins of Palmyra or Hecatompolis. Singing birds and flowers perchance have begun to appear here, for flowers as well as weeds follow in the footsteps of man. These hemlocks whispered over his head, these hickory logs were his fuel, and these pitch-pine roots kindled his fire; yonder fuming rill in the hollow, whose thin and airy vapor still ascends as busily as ever, though he is far off now, was his well. These hemlock boughs, and the straw upon this raised platform, were his bed, and this broken dish held his drink. But he has not been here this season, for the phæbes built their nest upon this shelf last summer. I find some embers left, as if he had but just gone out, where he baked his pot of beans, and while at evening he smoked his pipe, whose stemless bowl lies in the ashes, chatted with his only companion, if perchance he had any, about the depth of the snow on the morrow, already falling fast and thick without, or disputed whether the last sound was the screech of an owl, or the creak of a bough, or imagination only; and through his broad chimney-throat, in the late winter evening, ere he stretched himself upon the straw, he looked up to learn the progress of the storm, and seeing the bright stars of Cassiopeia's chair shining brightly down upon him, fell contentedly asleep.

See how many traces from which we may learn the chopper's history. From this stump we may guess the sharpness of his ax, and from the slope of the stroke, on which side he stood, and whether he cut down the tree without going round it or changing hands; and, from the flexure of the splinters, we may know which way it fell. This one chip contains inscribed on it the whole history of the wood-chopper and of the world. On this scrap of paper, which held his sugar or salt, perchance, or was the wadding of his gun, sitting on a log in the forest, with what interest we read the tattle of cities, of those larger huts, empty and to let, like this, in High-streets and Broad-ways. The eaves are dripping on the south side of this simple roof, while the titmouse lisps in the pine and the genial warmth of the sun around the door is somewhat kind and human.

After two seasons, this rude dwelling does not deform the scene. Already the birds resort to it, to build their nests, and you may track to its door the feet of many quadrupeds. Thus, for a long time, nature overlooks the encroachment and profanity of man. The wood still cheerfully and unsuspectingly echoes the strokes of the axe that fells it, and while they are few and seldom, they enhance its wildness, and all the elements strive to naturalize the sound.

**8. Palmyra**—the modern Tedmour in Syria, a great city under the later Roman Empire, the ruins of which became famous in the later eighteenth century. **9. Hecatompolis**—the modern Dameghan in Persia, now deserted, but populous under the caliphate. **24. Cassiopeia's chair**—the constellation of that name.



Now our path begins to ascend gradually to the top of this high hill, from whose precipitous south side, we can look over the broad country, of forest and field and river, to the distant snowy mountains. See yonder thin column of smoke curling up through the woods from some invisible farm-house; the  
 5 standard raised over some rural homestead. There must be a warmer and more genial spot there below, as where we detect the vapor from a spring forming a cloud above the trees. What fine relations are established between the traveller who discovers this airy column from some eminence in the forest and him who sits below. Up goes the smoke as silently and naturally as the vapor ex-  
 10 hales from the leaves, and as busy disposing itself in wreathes as the housewife on the hearth below. It is a hieroglyphic of man's life, and suggests more intimate and important things than the boiling of a pot. Where its fine column rises above the forest, like an ensign, some human life has planted itself,—and such is the beginning of Rome, the establishment of the arts, and the founda-  
 15 tion of empires, whether on the prairies of America or the steppes of Asia.

And now we descend again, to the brink of this woodland lake, which lies in a hollow of the hills, as if it were their expressed juice, and that of the leaves which are annually steeped in it. Without outlet or inlet to the eye, it has still its history, in the lapse of its waves, in the rounded pebbles on its  
 20 shore, and in the pines which grow down to its brink. It has not been idle, though sedentary, but, like Abu Musa, teaches that "sitting still at home is the heavenly way; the going out is the way of the world." Yet in its evaporation it travels as far as any. In summer it is the earth's liquid eye; a mirror in the breast of nature. The sins of the wood are washed out in it. See how the woods  
 25 form an amphitheatre about it, and it is an arena for all the genialness of nature. All trees direct the traveller to its brink, all paths seek it out, birds fly to it, quadrupeds flee to it, and the very ground inclines toward it. It is nature's saloon, where she has sat down to her toilet. Consider her silent economy and tidiness; how the sun comes with his evaporation to sweep the dust from its  
 30 surface each morning, and a fresh surface is constantly welling up; and annually, after whatever impurities have accumulated herein, its liquid transparency appears again in the spring. In summer a hushed music seems to sweep across its surface. But now a plain sheet of snow conceals it from our eyes, except when the wind has swept the ice bare, and the sere leaves are  
 35 gliding from side to side, tacking and veering on their tiny voyages. Here is one just keeled up against a pebble on shore, a dry beach leaf, rocking still, as if it would soon start again. A skilful engineer, methinks, might project its course since it fell from the parent stem. Here are all the elements for such a calculation. Its present position, the direction of the wind, the level of the  
 40 pond, and how much more is given. In its scarred edges and veins is its log rolled up.

We fancy ourselves in the interior of a larger house. The surface of the pond is our deal table or sanded floor, and the woods rise abruptly from its edge, like the walls of a cottage. The lines set to catch pickerel through the ice look  
 45 like a larger culinary preparation, and the men stand about on the white

21. **Abu Musa**—presumably Abu Hammu Musa (1323/4-1389), a Moorish king in Spain, author of a treatise on politics, and a patron of scholars. 40. **log**—journal of a voyage.

ground like pieces of forest furniture. The actions of these men, at the distance of half a mile over the ice and snow, impress us as when we read the exploits of Alexander in history. They seem not unworthy of the scenery, and as momentous as the conquest of kingdoms.

Again we have wandered through the arches of the wood, until from its skirts we hear the distant booming of ice from yonder bay of the river, as if it were moved by some other and subtler tide than oceans know. To me it has a strange sound of home, thrilling as the voice of one's distant and noble kindred. A mild summer shines over forest and lake, and though there is but one green leaf for many rods, yet nature enjoys a serene health. Every sound is fraught with the same mysterious assurance of health, as well now the creaking of the boughs in January, as the soft sough of the wind in July.

When Winter fringes every bough  
With his fantastic wreath,  
And puts the seal of silence now  
Upon the leaves beneath; 15

When every stream in its pent-house  
Goes gurgling on its way,  
And in his gallery the mouse  
Nibbleth the meadow hay; 20

Methinks the summer still is nigh,  
And lurketh underneath,  
As that same meadowmouse doth lie  
Snug in the last year's heath.

And if perchance the Chickadee  
Lisp a faint note anon,  
The snow [is] summer's canopy,  
Which she herself put on. 25

Fair blossoms deck the cheerful trees,  
And dazzling fruits depend,  
The north wind sighs a summer breeze,  
The nipping frosts to fend, 30

Bringing glad tidings unto me,  
The while I stand all ear,  
Of a serene eternity,  
Which need not winter fear. 35

Out on the silent pond straightway  
The restless ice doth crack,  
And pond sprites merry gambols play  
Amid the deafening rack. 40

Eager I hasten to the vale,  
As if I heard brave news,

27. is—The *Dial* text reads "in," obviously a misprint, which *Miscellanies* corrects.

How nature held high festival,  
Which it were hard to lose.

5 I gambol with my neighbor ice,  
And sympathizing quake,  
As each new crack darts in a trice  
Across the gladsome lake.

10 One with the cricket in the ground,  
And fagot on the hearth,  
Resounds the rare domestic sound  
Along the forest path.

Before night we will take a journey on skates along the course of this meandering river, as full of novelty to one who sits by the cottage fire all the winter's day, as if it were over the polar ice, with Captain Parry or Franklin; following the winding of the stream, now flowing amid hills, now spreading  
15 out into fair meadows, and forming a myriad coves and bays where the pine and hemlock overarch. The river flows in the rear of the towns, and we see all things from a new and wilder side. The fields and gardens come down to it with a frankness, and freedom from pretension, which they do not wear on the highway. It is the outside and edge of the earth. Our eyes are not offended  
20 by violent contrasts. The last rail of the farmer's fence is some swaying willow bough, which still preserves its freshness, and here at length all fences stop, and we no longer cross any road. We may go far up within the country now by the most retired and level road, never climbing a hill, but by broad levels ascending to the upland meadows. It is a beautiful illustration of the law of  
25 obedience, the flow of a river; the path for a sick man, a highway down which an acorn cup may float secure with its freight. Its slight occasional falls, whose precipices would not diversify the landscape, are celebrated by mist and spray, and attract the traveler from far and near. From the remote interior, its current conducts him by broad and easy steps, or by one gentle inclined plain, to  
30 the sea. Thus by an early and constant yielding to the inequalities of the ground it secures itself the easiest passage.

No domain of nature is quite closed to man at all times, and now we draw near to the empire of the fishes. Our feet glide swiftly over unfathomed depths, where in summer our line tempted the pout and perch, and where the stately  
35 pickerel lurked in the long corridors formed by the bulrushes. The deep, impenetrable marsh, where the heron waded, and bittern squatted, is made pervious to our swift shoes, as if a thousand railroads had been made into it. With one impulse we are carried to the cabin of the muskrat, that earliest settler, and see him dart away under the transparent ice, like a furred fish, to his  
40 hole in the bank; and we glide rapidly over meadows where lately "the mower whet his scythe," through beds of frozen cranberries mixed with meadow grass. We skate near to where the blackbird, the pewee, and the kingbird hung their nests over the water, and the hornets builded from the maple in the

13. Parry or Franklin—See note 8, p. 884. 29. gentle . . . plain—"gentler inclined plane" (*Miscellanies*). 40. mower—adapted from Milton's "L'Allegro," line 66.

swamp. How many gay warblers now following the sun, have radiated from this nest of silverbirch and thistledown. On the swamp's outer edge was hung the supermarine village, where no foot penetrated. In this hollow tree the wood-duck reared her brood, and slid away each day to forage in yonder fen.

In winter, nature is a cabinet of curiosities, full of dried specimens, in their natural order and position. The meadows and forests are a *hortus siccus*. The leaves and grasses stand perfectly pressed by the air without screw or gum, and the birds' nests are not hung on an artificial twig, but where they builded them. We go about dry shod to inspect the summer's work in the rank swamp, and see what a growth have got the alders, the willows, and the maples; testifying to how many warm suns, and fertilizing dews and showers. See what strides their boughs took in the luxuriant summer,—and anon these dormant buds will carry them onward and upward another span into the heavens.

Occasionally we wade through fields of snow, under whose depths the river is lost for many rods, to appear again to the right or left, where we least expected; still holding on its way underneath, with a faint, stertorous, rumbling sound, as if, like the bear and marmot, it too had hibernated, and we had followed its faint summer trail to where it earthed itself in snow and ice. At first we should have thought that rivers would be empty and dry in mid winter, or else frozen solid till the spring thawed them; but their volume is not diminished even, for only a superficial cold bridges their surfaces. The thousand springs which feed the lakes and streams are flowing still. The issues of a few surface springs only are closed, and they go to swell the deep reservoirs. Nature's wells are below the frost. The summer brooks are not filled with snow-water, nor does the mower quench his thirst with that alone. The streams are swollen when the snow melts in the spring, because nature's work has been delayed, the water being turned into ice and snow, whose particles are less smooth and round, and do not find their level so soon.

Far over the ice, between the hemlock woods and snow-clad hills, stands the pickerel fisher, his lines set in some retired cove, like a Finlander, with his arms thrust into the pouches of his dreadnought; with dull, snowy, fishy thoughts, himself a finless fish, separated a few inches from his race; dumb, erect, and made to be enveloped in clouds and snows, like the pines on shore. In these wild scenes, men stand about in the scenery, or move deliberately and heavily, having sacrificed the sprightliness and vivacity of towns to the dumb sobriety of nature. He does not make the scenery less wild, more than the jays and muskrats, but stands there as a part of it, as the natives are represented in the voyages of early navigators, at Nootka Sound, and on the North-west coast, with their furs about them, before they were tempted to loquacity by a scrap of iron. He belongs to the natural family of man, and is planted deeper in nature and has more root than the inhabitants of towns. Go to him, ask what luck, and you will learn that he too is a worshiper of the unseen. Hear with what sincere deference and waving gesture in his tone he speaks of the

6. *hortus siccus*—literally, dry garden; a collection of dried botanical specimens. 31. *dreadnought*—a coat of very thick cloth. 38. *early navigators*—This passage is reminiscent of reading in Hakluyt's *Voyages*, especially of such accounts as those of Luke Fox; but the travel books of Parry, Franklin, and Ross describe similar instances.

lake pickerel, which he has never seen, his primitive and ideal race of pickerel. He is connected with the shore still, as by a fish-line, and yet remembers the season when he took fish through the ice on the pond, while the peas were up in his garden at home.

- 5 But now, while we have loitered, the clouds have gathered again, and a few straggling snow-flakes are beginning to descend. Faster and faster they fall, shutting out the distant objects from sight. The snow falls on every wood and field, and no crevice is forgotten; by the river and the pond, on the hill and in the valley. Quadrupeds are confined to their coverts and the birds sit upon  
10 their perches this peaceful hour. There is not so much sound as in fair weather, but silently and gradually every slope, and the grey walls and fences, and the polished ice, and the sere leaves, which were not buried before, are concealed, and the tracks of men and beasts are lost. With so little effort does nature reassert her rule, and blot out the traces of men. Hear how Homer has described  
15 the same. "The snowflakes fall thick and fast on a winter's day. The winds are lulled, and the snow falls incessant, covering the tops of the mountains, and the hills, and the plains where the lotustree grows, and the cultivated fields, and they are falling by the inlets and shores of the foaming sea, but are silently dissolved by the waves." The snow levels all things, and infolds them deeper in  
20 the bosom of nature, as, in the slow summer, vegetation creeps up to the entablature of the temple, and the turrets of the castle, and helps her to prevail over art.

- The surly night-wind rustles through the wood, and warns us to retrace our steps, while the sun goes down behind the thickening storm, and birds seek  
25 their roosts, and cattle their stalls.

"Drooping the lab'rer ox  
Stands covered o'er with snow, and *now* demands  
The fruit of all his toil."

- Though winter is represented in the almanac as an old man, facing the wind  
30 and sleet, and drawing his cloak about him, we rather think of him as a merry wood-chopper, and warm-blooded youth, as blithe as summer. The unexplored grandeur of the storm keeps up the spirits of the traveller. It does not trifle with us, but has a sweet earnestness. In winter we lead a more inward life. Our hearts are warm and merry, like cottages under drifts, whose windows  
35 and doors are half concealed, but from whose chimneys the smoke cheerfully ascends. The imprisoning drifts increase the sense of comfort which the house affords, and in the coldest days we are content to sit over the hearth and see the sky through the chimney top, enjoying the quiet and serene life that may be had in a warm corner by the chimney side, or feeling our pulse by listening  
40 to the low of cattle in the street, or the sound of the flail in distant barns all the long afternoon. No doubt a skilful physician could determine our health by observing how these simple and natural sounds affected us. We enjoy now, not an oriental, but a boreal leisure, around warm stoves and fireplaces, and watch the shadow of motes in the sunbeams.

15-19. "The snowflakes . . . waves"—from Homer's *Iliad*, XII, lines 278 ff. 26-28. "Drooping . . . toil"—again, from Thomson's "Winter," Thoreau changing "then" to *now*. 43. boreal—northern.

Sometimes our fate grows too homely and familiarly serious ever to be cruel. Consider how for three months the human destiny is wrapped in furs. The good Hebrew Revelation takes no cognizance of all this cheerful snow. Is there no religion for the temperate and frigid zones? We know of no scripture which records the pure benignity of the gods on a New England winter night. Their praises have never been sung, only their wrath deprecated. The best scripture, after all, records but a meagre faith. Its saints live reserved and austere. Let a brave devout man spend the year in the woods of Maine or Labrador, and see if the Hebrew Scriptures speak adequately to his condition and experience, from the setting in of winter to the breaking up of the ice.

Now commences the long winter evening around the farmer's hearth, when the thoughts of the indwellers travel far abroad, and men are by nature and necessity charitable and liberal to all creatures. Now is the happy resistance to cold, when the farmer reaps his reward, and thinks of his preparedness for winter, and through the glittering panes, sees with equanimity "the mansion of the northern bear," for now the storm is over,

"The full ethereal round,  
Infinite worlds disclosing to the view,  
Shines out intensely keen; and all one cope  
Of starry glitter glows from pole to pole."

H. D. T.

## CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

First entitled "Resistance to Civil Government," this essay was published in *Aesthetic Papers* (Boston, 1849), a volume edited by Elizabeth P. Peabody. Although Thoreau speaks of it as a lecture, it is not clear where he first delivered it. Retitled "Civil Disobedience," the essay reappears in the volume entitled *A Yankee in Canada*, and was later transferred to *Miscellanies* (1893). Neglected in the nineteenth century, the essay is now regarded as one of Thoreau's most important pronouncements, and is said to have had a profound influence upon Gandhi.

**I** HEARTILY accept the motto,—“That government is best which governs least;” and I should like to see it acted up to more rapidly and systematically. Carried out, it finally amounts to this, which also I believe,—“That government is best which governs not at all;” and when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of government which they will have. Government is at best but an expedient; but most governments are usually, and all governments are sometimes, inexpedient. The objections which have been brought against a standing army, and they are many and weighty, and deserve to prevail, may also at last be brought against a standing government. The standing army is only an arm of the standing government. The government itself, which is only the mode which the people have chosen to execute their will, is equally liable to be abused and perverted before the people can act through it. Witness the present Mexican war, the work of comparatively a few individuals using

15-16. “the mansion . . . bear”—from Thomson’s “Winter.” 17-20. “The full . . . pole”—again, with minor differences of punctuation, from “Winter.” 34. Mexican war—begun May 11, 1846, and concluded Feb. 2, 1848. The essay was composed during the struggle.

the standing government as their tool; for, in the outset, the people would not have consented to this measure.

This American government,—what is it but a tradition, though a recent one, endeavoring to transmit itself unimpaired to posterity, but each instant losing  
 5 some of its integrity? It has not the vitality and force of a single living man; for a single man can bend it to his will. It is a sort of wooden gun to the people themselves. But it is not the less necessary for this; for the people must have some complicated machinery or other, and hear its din, to satisfy that idea of government which they have. Governments show thus how successfully  
 10 men can be imposed on, even impose on themselves, for their own advantage. It is excellent, we must all allow. Yet this government never of itself furthered any enterprise, but by the alacrity with which it got out of its way. *It* does not keep the country free. *It* does not settle the West. *It* does not educate. The character inherent in the American people has done all that has been accom-  
 15 plished; and it would have done somewhat more, if the government had not sometimes got in its way. For government is an expedient by which men would fain succeed in letting one another alone; and, as has been said, when it is most expedient, the governed are most let alone by it. Trade and commerce, if they were not made of india-rubber, would never manage to bounce over  
 20 the obstacles which legislators are continually putting in their way; and, if one were to judge these men wholly by the effects of their actions and not partly by their intentions, they would deserve to be classed and punished with those mischievous persons who put obstructions on the railroads.

But, to speak practically and as a citizen, unlike those who call themselves no-  
 25 government men, I ask for, not at once no government, but *at once* a better government. Let every man make known what kind of government would command his respect, and that will be one step toward obtaining it.

After all, the practical reason why, when the power is once in the hands of the people, a majority are permitted, and for a long period continue, to rule  
 30 is not because they are most likely to be in the right, nor because this seems fairest to the minority, but because they are physically the strongest. But a government in which the majority rule in all cases cannot be based on justice, even as far as men understand it. Can there be a government in which majorities do not virtually decide right and wrong, but conscience?—in which  
 35 majorities decide only those questions to which the rule of expediency is applicable? Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience, then? I think that we should be men first, and subjects afterward. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation  
 40 which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right. It is truly enough said that a corporation has no conscience; but a corporation of conscientious men is a corporation *with* a conscience. Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice. A common and natural result  
 45 of an undue respect for law is, that you may see a file of soldiers, colonel, captain, corporal, privates, powder-monkeys, and all, marching in admirable order over hill and dale to the wars, against their wills, ay, against their com-

mon sense and consciences, which makes it very steep marching indeed, and produces a palpitation of the heart. They have no doubt that it is a damnable business in which they are concerned; they are all peaceably inclined. Now, what are they? Men at all? or small movable forts and magazines, at the service of some unscrupulous man in power? Visit the Navy-Yard, and behold a marine, such a man as an American government can make, or such as it can make a man with its black arts,—a mere shadow and reminiscence of humanity, a man laid out alive and standing, and already, as one may say, buried under arms with funeral accompaniments, though it may be,—

“Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,  
As his corse to the rampart we hurried;  
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot  
O’er the grave where our hero we buried.”

The mass of men serve the state thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies. They are the standing army, and the militia, jailers, constables, *posse comitatus*, etc. In most cases there is no free exercise whatever of the judgment or of the moral sense; but they put themselves on a level with wood and earth and stones; and wooden men can perhaps be manufactured that will serve the purpose as well. Such command no more respect than men of straw or a lump of dirt. They have the same sort of worth only as horses and dogs. Yet such as these even are commonly esteemed good citizens. Others—as most legislators, politicians, lawyers, ministers, and office-holders—serve the state chiefly with their heads; and, as they rarely make any moral distinctions, they are as likely to serve the devil, without *intending* it, as God. A very few,—as heroes, patriots, martyrs, reformers in the great sense, and *men*—serve the state with their consciences also, and so necessarily resist it for the most part; and they are commonly treated as enemies by it. A wise man will only be useful as a man, and will not submit to be “clay,” and “stop a hole to keep the wind away,” but leave that office to his dust at least:—

“I am too high-born to be propertied,  
To be a secondary at control,  
Or useful serving-man and instrument  
To any sovereign state throughout the world.”

He who gives himself entirely to his fellow-men appears to them useless and selfish; but he who gives himself partially to them is pronounced a benefactor and philanthropist.

How does it become a man to behave toward this American government to-day? I answer, that he cannot without disgrace be associated with it. I cannot for an instant recognize that political organization as *my* government which is the *slave's* government also.

5. Navy-Yard—at Charlestown (now a part of Boston). 10-13. “Not . . . buried”—the first stanza of “The Burial of Sir John Moore at Corunna” (1817) by Charles Wolfe (1791-1823). 16. *posse comitatus*—the sheriff’s posse, or body of men armed with legal authority to arrest. 28-29. “clay . . . away”—*Cf. Hamlet*, Act v, scene 1, lines 201-04. 30-33. “I am . . . world”—from *King John*, Act v, scene 2, lines 79-82. 37-38. American . . . to-day—that is, the administration of Polk.



All men recognize the right of revolution; that is, the right to refuse allegiance to, and to resist, the government, when its tyranny or its inefficiency are great and unendurable. But almost all say that such is not the case now. But such was the case, they think, in the Revolution of '75. If one were to  
 5 tell me that this was a bad government because it taxed certain foreign commodities brought to its ports, it is most probable that I should not make an ado about it, for I can do without them. All machines have their friction; and possibly this does enough good to counterbalance the evil. At any rate, it is a great evil to make a stir about it. But when the friction comes to have its machine,  
 10 and oppression and robbery are organized, I say, let us not have such a machine any longer. In other words, when a sixth of the population of a nation which has undertaken to be the refuge of liberty are slaves, and a whole country is unjustly overrun and conquered by a foreign army, and subjected to military law, I think that it is not too soon for honest men to rebel  
 15 and revolutionize. What makes this duty the more urgent is the fact that the country so overrun is not our own, but ours is the invading army.

Paley, a common authority with many on moral questions, in his chapter on the "Duty of Submission to Civil Government," resolves all civil obligation into expediency; and he proceeds to say "that so long as the interest of the whole  
 20 society requires it, that is, so long as the established government cannot be resisted or changed without public inconveniency, it is the will of God . . . that the established government be obeyed,—and no longer. This principle being admitted, the justice of every particular case of resistance is reduced to a computation of the quantity of the danger and grievance on the one side,  
 25 and of the probability and expense of redressing it on the other." Of this, he says, every man shall judge for himself. But Paley appears never to have contemplated those cases to which the rule of expediency does not apply, in which a people, as well as an individual, must do justice, cost what it may. If I have unjustly wrested a plank from a drowning man, I must restore it to him  
 30 though I drown myself. This, according to Paley, would be inconvenient. But he that would save his life, in such a case, shall lose it. This people must cease to hold slaves, and to make war on Mexico, though it cost them their existence as a people.

In their practice, nations agree with Paley; but does any one think that  
 35 Massachusetts does exactly what is right at the present crisis?

"A drab of state, a cloth-o'-silver slut,  
 To have her train borne up, and her soul trail in the dirt."

Practically speaking, the opponents to a reform in Massachusetts are not a hundred thousand politicians at the South, but a hundred thousand merchants  
 40 and farmers here, who are more interested in commerce and agriculture than they are in humanity, and are not prepared to do justice to the slave and to Mexico, *cost what it may*. I quarrel not with far-off foes, but with those who, near at home, coöperate with, and do the bidding of, those far away, and with-

13. whole country—Mexico. 17. Paley—William Paley (1743-1805), influential English moral philosopher, whose *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* appeared in 1785. The quotation in lines 19-25 may be found in Vol. II, p. 142, of the edition of 1793 (London).

out whom the latter would be harmless. We are accustomed to say, that the mass of men are unprepared; but improvement is slow, because the few are not materially wiser or better than the many. It is not so important that many should be as good as you, as that there be some absolute goodness somewhere; for that will leaven the whole lump. There are thousands who are *in opinion* 5 opposed to slavery and to the war, who yet in effect do nothing to put an end to them; who, esteeming themselves children of Washington and Franklin, sit down with their hands in their pockets, and say that they know not what to do, and do nothing; who even postpone the question of freedom to the question of free trade, and quietly read the prices-current along with the latest 10 advices from Mexico, after dinner, and, it may be, fall asleep over them both. What is the price-current of an honest man and patriot to-day? They hesitate, and they regret, and sometimes they petition; but they do nothing in earnest and with effect. They will wait, well disposed, for others to remedy the evil, that they may no longer have it to regret. At most, they give only a cheap 15 vote, and a feeble countenance and God-speed, to the right, as it goes by them. There are nine hundred and ninety-nine patrons of virtue to one virtuous man. But it is easier to deal with the real possessor of a thing than with the temporary guardian of it.

All voting is a sort of gaming, like checkers or backgammon, with a slight 20 moral tinge to it, a playing with right and wrong, with moral questions; and betting naturally accompanies it. The character of the voters is not staked. I cast my vote, perchance, as I think right; but I am not vitally concerned that that right should prevail. I am willing to leave it to the majority. Its obligation, therefore, never exceeds that of expediency. Even voting *for the right* is 25 *doing* nothing for it. It is only expressing to men feebly your desire that it should prevail. A wise man will not leave the right to the mercy of chance, nor wish it to prevail through the power of the majority. There is but little virtue in the action of masses of men. When the majority shall at length vote for the abolition of slavery, it will be because they are indifferent to slavery, 30 or because there is but little slavery left to be abolished by their vote. *They* will then be the only slaves. Only *his* vote can hasten the abolition of slavery who asserts his own freedom by his vote.

I hear of a convention to be held at Baltimore, or elsewhere, for the selection of a candidate for the Presidency, made up chiefly of editors, and men who 35 are politicians by profession; but I think, what is it to any independent, intelligent, and respectable man what decision they may come to? Shall we not have the advantage of his wisdom and honesty, nevertheless? Can we not count upon some independent votes? Are there not many individuals in the country who do not attend conventions? But no: I find that the respectable 40 man, so called, has immediately drifted from his position, and despairs of his country, when his country has more reason to despair of him. He forthwith adopts one of the candidates thus selected as the only *available* one, thus proving that he is himself *available* for any purposes of the demagogue. His vote is of no more worth than that of any unprincipled foreigner or hireling na- 45

5. leaven . . . lump—Cf. I Cor. 5: 6. 34. convention . . . Baltimore—presumably the Democratic convention of 1848.

tive, who may have been bought. O for a man who is a *man*, and, as my neighbor says, has a bone in his back which you cannot pass your hand through! Our statistics are at fault: the population has been returned too large. How many *men* are there to a square thousand miles in this country? Hardly  
 5 one. Does not America offer any inducement for men to settle here? The American has dwindled into an Odd Fellow,—one who may be known by the development of his organ of gregariousness, and a manifest lack of intellect and cheerful self-reliance; whose first and chief concern, on coming into the world, is to see that the almshouses are in good repair; and, before yet he  
 10 has lawfully donned the virile garb, to collect a fund for the support of the widows and orphans that may be; who, in short, ventures to live only by the aid of the Mutual Insurance company, which has promised to bury him decently.

It is not a man's duty, as a matter of course, to devote himself to the eradication of any, even the most enormous, wrong; he may still properly have other concerns to engage him; but it is his duty, at least, to wash his hands of it, and, if he gives it no thought longer, not to give it practically his support. If I devote myself to other pursuits and contemplations, I must first see, at least, that I do not pursue them sitting upon another man's shoulders. I must  
 20 get off him first, that he may pursue his contemplations too. See what gross inconsistency is tolerated. I have heard some of my townsmen say, "I should like to have them order me out to help put down an insurrection of the slaves, or to march to Mexico;—see if I would go;" and yet these very men have each, directly by their allegiance, and so indirectly, at least, by their money,  
 25 furnished a substitute. The soldier is applauded who refuses to serve in an unjust war by those who do not refuse to sustain the unjust government which makes the war; is applauded by those whose own act and authority he disregards and sets at naught; as if the state were penitent to that degree that it hired one to scourge it while it sinned, but not to that degree that it left off  
 30 sinning for a moment. Thus, under the name of Order and Civil Government, we are all made at last to pay homage to and support our own meanness. After the first blush of sin comes its indifference; and from immoral it becomes, as it were, *unmoral*, and not quite unnecessary to that life which we have made.

The broadest and most prevalent error requires the most disinterested virtue  
 35 to sustain it. The slight reproach to which the virtue of patriotism is commonly liable, the noble are most likely to incur. Those who, while they disapprove of the character and measures of a government, yield to it their allegiance and support are undoubtedly its most conscientious supporters, and so frequently the most serious obstacles to reform. Some are petitioning the State to dis-  
 40 solve the Union, to disregard the requisitions of the President. Why do they not dissolve it themselves,—the union between themselves and the State,—and refuse to pay their quota into its treasury? Do not they stand in the same relation to the State that the State does to the Union? And have not the same

6. **Odd Fellow**—the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, the first establishment of which in America seems to date from 1806, but which was officially separated from the English branch of the society in 1842-43. 10. **virile garb**—humorous allusion to the *toga virilis*, which the Roman boy put on when he reached man's estate

reasons prevented the State from resisting the Union which have prevented them from resisting the State?

How can a man be satisfied to entertain an opinion merely, and enjoy *it*? Is there any enjoyment in it, if his opinion is that he is aggrieved? If you are cheated out of a single dollar by your neighbor, you do not rest satisfied with knowing that you are cheated, or with saying that you are cheated, or even with petitioning him to pay you your due; but you take effectual steps at once to obtain the full amount, and see that you are never cheated again. Action from principle, the perception and the performance of right, changes things and relations; it is essentially revolutionary, and does not consist wholly with anything which was. It not only divides States and churches, it divides families; ay, it divides the *individual*, separating the diabolical in him from the divine.

Unjust laws exist: shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavor to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress them at once? Men generally, under such a government as this, think that they ought to wait until they have persuaded the majority to alter them. They think that, if they should resist, the remedy would be worse than the evil. But it is the fault of the government itself that the remedy *is* worse than the evil. *It* makes it worse. Why is it not more apt to anticipate and provide for reform? Why does it not cherish its wise minority? Why does it cry and resist before it is hurt? Why does it not encourage its citizens to be on the alert to point out its faults, and *do* better than it would have them? Why does it always crucify Christ, and excommunicate Copernicus and Luther, and pronounce Washington and Franklin rebels?

One would think, that a deliberate and practical denial of its authority was the only offense never contemplated by government; else, why has it not assigned its definite, its suitable and proportionate penalty? If a man who has no property refuses but once to earn nine shillings for the State, he is put in prison for a period unlimited by any law that I know, and determined only by the discretion of those who placed him there; but if he should steal ninety times nine shillings from the State, he is soon permitted to go at large again.

If the injustice is part of the necessary friction of the machine of government, let it go, let it go: perchance it will wear smooth,—certainly the machine will wear out. If the injustice has a spring, or a pulley, or a rope, or a crank, exclusively for itself, then perhaps you may consider whether the remedy will not be worse than the evil; but if it is of such a nature that it requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then, I say, break the law. Let your life be a counter friction to stop the machine. What I have to do is to see, at any rate, that I do not lend myself to the wrong which I condemn.

As for adopting the ways which the State has provided for remedying the evil, I know not of such ways. They take too much time, and a man's life will be gone. I have other affairs to attend to. I came into this world, not chiefly to make this a good place to live in, but to live in it, be it good or bad. A man has not everything to do, but something; and because he cannot do

24. Copernicus and Luther—Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) was not excommunicated, but Martin Luther (1483-1543) was officially condemned in 1520.

*everything*, it is not necessary that he should do *something* wrong. It is not my business to be petitioning the Governor or the Legislature any more than it is theirs to petition me; and if they should not hear my petition, what should I do then? But in this case the State has provided no way: its very Constitu-

tion is the evil. This may seem to be harsh and stubborn and unconciliatory; but it is to treat with the utmost kindness and consideration the only spirit that can appreciate or deserves it. So is all change for the better, like birth and death, which convulse the body.

I do not hesitate to say, that those who call themselves Abolitionists should at once effectually withdraw their support, both in person and property, from the government of Massachusetts, and not wait till they constitute a majority of one, before they suffer the right to prevail through them. I think that it is enough if they have God on their side, without waiting for that other one. Moreover, any man more right than his neighbors constitutes a majority of one already.

I meet this American government, or its representative, the State government, directly, and face to face, once a year—no more—in the person of its tax-gatherer; this is the only mode in which a man situated as I am necessarily meets it; and it then says distinctly, Recognize me; and the simplest, the most effectual, and, in the present posture of affairs, the indispensablest mode of treating with it on this head, of expressing your little satisfaction with and love for it, is to deny it then. My civil neighbor, the tax-gatherer, is the very man I have to deal with,—for it is, after all, with men and not with parchment that I quarrel,—and he has voluntarily chosen to be an agent of the government. How shall he ever know well what he is and does as an officer of the government, or as a man, until he is obliged to consider whether he shall treat me, his neighbor, for whom he has respect, as a neighbor and well-disposed man, or as a maniac and disturber of the peace, and see if he can get over this obstruction to his neighborliness without a ruder and more impetuous thought or speech corresponding with his action. I know this well, that if one thousand, if one hundred, if ten men whom I could name,—if ten *honest* men only,—ay, if *one* HONEST man, in this State of Massachusetts, *ceasing to hold slaves*, were actually to withdraw from this copartnership, and be locked up in the county jail therefor, it would be the abolition of slavery in America. For it matters not how small the beginning may seem to be: what is once well done is done forever. But we love better to talk about it: that we say is our mission. Reform keeps many scores of newspapers in its service, but not one man. If my esteemed neighbor, the State's ambassador, who will devote his days to the settlement of the question of human rights in the Council Chamber, instead of being threatened with the prisons of Carolina, were to sit down the prisoner of Massachusetts, that State which is so anxious to foist the sin of slavery upon her sister,—though at present she can discover only an act of inhospitality to be the ground of a quarrel with her,—the Legislature would not wholly waive the subject the following winter.

**38. State's ambassador**—Samuel Hoar, of Concord, officially sent by Massachusetts to protest against the unconstitutional imprisonment of colored Massachusetts seamen by South Carolina, and driven from Charleston by threats.

Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison. The proper place to-day, the only place which Massachusetts has provided for her freer and less desponding spirits, is in her prisons, to be put out and locked out of the State by her own act, as they have already put themselves out by their principles. It is there that the fugitive slave, and the Mexican prisoner on parole, and the Indian come to plead the wrongs of his race should find them; on that separate, but more free and honorable ground, where the State places those who are not *with* her, but *against* her,—the only house in a slave State in which a free man can abide with honor. If any think that their influence would be lost there, and their voices no longer afflict the ear of the State, that they would not be as an enemy within its walls, they do not know by how much truth is stronger than error, nor how much more eloquently and effectively he can combat injustice who has experienced a little in his own person. Cast your whole vote, not a strip of paper merely, but your whole influence. A minority is powerless while it conforms to the majority; it is not even a minority then; but it is irresistible when it clogs by its whole weight. If the alternative is to keep all just men in prison, or give up war and slavery, the State will not hesitate which to choose. If a thousand men were not to pay their tax-bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure, as it would be to pay them, and enable the State to commit violence and shed innocent blood. This is, in fact, the definition of a peaceable revolution, if any such is possible. If the tax-gatherer, or any other public officer, asks me, as one has done, "But what shall I do?" my answer is, "If you really wish to do anything, resign your office." When the subject has refused allegiance, and the officer has resigned his office, then the revolution is accomplished. But even suppose blood should flow. Is there not a sort of blood shed when the conscience is wounded? Through this wound a man's real manhood and immortality flow out, and he bleeds to an everlasting death. I see this blood flowing now.

I have contemplated the imprisonment of the offender, rather than the seizure of his goods,—though both will serve the same purpose,—because they who assert the purest right, and consequently are most dangerous to a corrupt State, commonly have not spent much time in accumulating property. To such the State renders comparatively small service, and a slight tax is wont to appear exorbitant, particularly if they are obliged to earn it by special labor with their hands. If there were one who lived wholly without the use of money, the State itself would hesitate to demand it of him. But the rich man—not to make any invidious comparison—is always sold to the institution which makes him rich. Absolutely speaking, the more money, the less virtue; for money comes between a man and his objects, and obtains them for him; and it was certainly no great virtue to obtain it. It puts to rest many questions which he would otherwise be taxed to answer; while the only new question which it puts is the hard but superfluous one, how to spend it. Thus his moral ground is taken from under his feet. The opportunities of living are diminished in proportion as what are called the "means" are increased. The best thing a man can do for his culture when he is rich is to endeavor to carry out those schemes which he entertained when he was poor. Christ answered the Herodians according

to their condition. "Show me the tribute-money," said he;—and took one penny out of his pocket;—if you use money which has the image of Caesar on it and which he has made current and valuable, that is, *if you are men of the State*, and gladly enjoy the advantages of Caesar's government, then pay him back  
 5 some of his own when he demands it. "Render therefore to Caesar that which is Caesar's, and to God those things which are God's,"—leaving them no wiser than before as to which was which; for they did not wish to know.

When I converse with the freest of my neighbors, I perceive that, whatever they may say about the magnitude and seriousness of the question, and their  
 10 regard for the public tranquillity, the long and the short of the matter is, that they cannot spare the protection of the existing government, and they dread the consequences to their property and families of disobedience to it. For my own part, I should not like to think that I ever rely on the protection of the State. But, if I deny the authority of the State when it presents its tax-bill, it  
 15 will soon take and waste all my property, and so harass me and my children without end. This is hard. This makes it impossible for a man to live honestly, and at the same time comfortably, in outward respects. It will not be worth the while to accumulate property; that would be sure to go again. You must hire or squat somewhere, and raise but a small crop, and eat that soon.  
 20 You must live within yourself, and depend upon yourself always tucked up and ready for a start, and not have many affairs. A man may grow rich in Turkey even, if he will be in all respects a good subject of the Turkish government. Confucius said: "If a state is governed by the principles of reason, poverty and misery are subjects of shame; if a state is not governed by the  
 25 principles of reason, riches and honors are the subjects of shame." No: until I want the protection of Massachusetts to be extended to me in some distant Southern port, where my liberty is endangered, or until I am bent solely on building up an estate at home by peaceful enterprise, I can afford to refuse allegiance to Massachusetts, and her right to my property and life. It costs me  
 30 less in every sense to incur the penalty of disobedience to the State than it would to obey. I should feel as if I were worth less in that case.

Some years ago, the State met me in behalf of the Church, and commanded me to pay a certain sum toward the support of a clergyman whose preaching my father attended, but never I myself. "Pay," it said, "or be locked up in the  
 35 jail." I declined to pay. But, unfortunately, another man saw fit to pay it. I did not see why the schoolmaster should be taxed to support the priest, and not the priest the schoolmaster; for I was not the State's schoolmaster, but I supported myself by voluntary subscription. I did not see why the lyceum should not present its tax-bill, and have the State to back its demand, as well  
 40 as the Church. However, at the request of the selectmen, I condescended to

1. "Show . . . money"—*Cf.* Matt. 22:19-21, from which the following quotation (lines 5-6) is also taken. 23. Confucius—Confucius (about 550-478 B.C.), Chinese philosopher. The quotation is from his *Four Books*. 28-29. refuse allegiance—In 1838 Thoreau refused to pay taxes for the support of the church, but he was not then put in jail. In 1845, however, on a visit from Walden Pond to Concord to get his shoes mended, Thoreau was imprisoned by Sam Staples, the Concord constable, for refusing to pay his poll tax, spent a night in jail, and was released when the tax was paid for him without his knowledge.

make some such statement as this in writing:—"Know all men by these presents, that I, Henry Thoreau, do not wish to be regarded as a member of any incorporated society which I have not joined." This I gave to the town clerk; and he has it. The State, having thus learned that I did not wish to be regarded as a member of that church, has never made a like demand on me since; though it said that it must adhere to its original presumption that time. If I had known how to name them, I should then have signed off in detail from all the societies which I never signed on to; but I did not know where to find a complete list.

I have paid no poll-tax for six years. I was put into a jail once on this account, for one night; and, as I stood considering the walls of solid stone, two or three feet thick, the door of wood and iron, a foot thick, and the iron grating which strained the light, I could not help being struck with the foolishness of that institution which treated me as if I were mere flesh and blood and bones, to be locked up. I wondered that it should have concluded at length that this was the best use it could put me to, and had never thought to avail itself of my services in some way. I saw that, if there was a wall of stone between me and my townsmen, there was a still more difficult one to climb or break through before they could get to be as free as I was. I did not for a moment feel confined, and the walls seemed a great waste of stone and mortar. I felt as if I alone of all my townsmen had paid my tax. They plainly did not know how to treat me, but behaved like persons who are underbred. In every threat and in every compliment there was a blunder; for they thought that my chief desire was to stand the other side of that stone wall. I could not but smile to see how industriously they locked the door on my meditations, which followed them out again without let or hindrance, and *they* were really all that was dangerous. As they could not reach me, they had resolved to punish my body; just as boys, if they cannot come at some person against whom they have a spite, will abuse his dog. I saw that the State was half-witted, that it was timid as a lone woman with her silver spoons, and that it did not know its friends from its foes, and I lost all my remaining respect for it, and pitied it.

Thus the State never intentionally confronts a man's sense, intellectual or moral, but only his body, his senses. It is not armed with superior wit or honesty, but with superior physical strength. I was not born to be forced. I will breathe after my own fashion. Let us see who is the strongest. What force has a multitude? They only can force me who obey a higher law than I. They force me to become like themselves. I do not hear of *men* being *forced* to live this way or that by masses of men. What sort of life were that to live? When I meet a government which says to me, "Your money or your life," why should I be in haste to give it my money? It may be in a great strait, and not know what to do: I cannot help that. It must help itself; do as I do. It is not worth the while to snivel about it. I am not responsible for the successful working of the machinery of society. I am not the son of the engineer. I perceive that, when an acorn and a chestnut fall side by side, the one does not remain inert to make way for the other, but both obey their own laws, and spring and



grow and flourish as best they can, till one, perchance, overshadows and destroys the other. If a plant cannot live according to its nature, it dies; and so a man.

5 The night in prison was novel and interesting enough. The prisoners in their shirt-sleeves were enjoying a chat and the evening air in the doorway, when I entered. But the jailer said, "Come, boys, it is time to lock up;" and so they dispersed, and I heard the sound of their steps returning into the hollow apartments. My room-mate was introduced to me by the jailer as "a first-rate fellow and a clever man." When the door was locked, he showed me  
10 where to hang my hat, and how he managed matters there. The rooms were whitewashed once a month; and this one, at least, was the whitest, most simply furnished, and probably the neatest apartment in the town. He naturally wanted to know where I came from, and what brought me there; and, when I had told him, I asked him in my turn how he came there, presuming him  
15 "Why," said he, "they accuse me of burning a barn; but I never did it." As near as I could discover, he had probably gone to bed in a barn when drunk, and smoked his pipe there; and so a barn was burnt. He had the reputation of being a clever man, had been there some three months waiting for his trial  
20 to come on, and would have to wait as much longer; but he was quite domesticated and contented, since he got his board for nothing, and thought that he was well treated.

He occupied one window, and I the other; and I saw that if one stayed there long, his principal business would be to look out the window. I had soon read  
25 all the tracts that were left there, and examined where former prisoners had broken out, and where a grate had been sawed off, and heard the history of the various occupants of that room; for I found that even here there was a history and a gossip which never circulated beyond the walls of the jail. Probably this is the only house in the town where verses are composed, which are  
30 afterward printed in circular form, but not published. I was shown quite a long list of verses which were composed by some young men who had been detected in an attempt to escape, who avenged themselves by singing them.

I pumped my fellow-prisoner as dry as I could, for fear I should never see him again; but at length he showed me which was my bed, and left me to  
35 blow out the lamp.

It was like traveling into a far country, such as I had never expected to behold, to lie there for one night. It seemed to me that I never had heard the town clock strike before, nor the evening sounds of the village; for we slept with the windows open, which were inside the grating. It was to see my native village in the light of the Middle Ages, and our Concord was turned into  
40 a Rhine stream, and visions of knights and castles passed before me. They were the voices of old burghers that I heard in the streets. I was an involuntary spectator and auditor of whatever was done and said in the kitchen of the adjacent village-inn,—a wholly new and rare experience to me. It was a closer  
45 view of my native town. I was fairly inside of it. I never had seen its institutions before. This is one of its peculiar institutions; for it is a shire town. I began to comprehend what its inhabitants were about.

In the morning, our breakfasts were put through the hole in the door, in small oblong-square tin pans, made to fit, and holding a pint of chocolate, with brown bread, and an iron spoon. When they called for the vessels again, I was green enough to return what bread I had left; but my comrade seized it, and said that I should lay that up for lunch or dinner. Soon after he was let out to work at haying in a neighboring field, whither he went every day, and would not be back till noon; so he bade me good-day, saying that he doubted if he should see me again. 5

When I came out of prison,—for some one interfered, and paid that tax,—I did not perceive that great changes had taken place on the common, such as he observed who went in a youth and emerged a tottering and gray-headed man; and yet a change had to my eyes come over the scene,—the town, and State, and country,—greater than any that mere time could effect. I saw yet more distinctly the State in which I lived. I saw to what extent the people among whom I lived could be trusted as good neighbors and friends; that their friendship was for summer weather only; that they did not greatly propose to do right; that they were a distinct race from me by their prejudices and superstitions, as the Chinamen and Malays are; that in their sacrifices to humanity they ran no risks, not even to their property; that after all they were not so noble but they treated the thief as he had treated them, and hoped, by a certain outward observance and a few prayers, and by walking in a particular straight though useless path from time to time, to save their souls. This may be to judge my neighbors harshly; for I believe that many of them are not aware that they have such an institution as the jail in their village. 10 15 20

It was formerly the custom in our village, when a poor debtor came out of jail, for his acquaintances to salute him, looking through their fingers, which were crossed to represent the grating of a jail window, "How do ye do?" My neighbors did not thus salute me, but first looked at me, and then at one another, as if I had returned from a long journey. I was put into jail as I was going to the shoemaker's to get a shoe which was mended. When I was let out the next morning, I proceeded to finish my errand, and, having put on my mended shoe, joined a huckleberry party, who were impatient to put themselves under my conduct; and in half an hour,—for the horse was soon tackled,—was in the midst of a huckleberry field, on one of our highest hills, two miles off, and then the State was nowhere to be seen. 25 30 35

This is the whole history of "My Prisons."

I have never declined paying the highway tax, because I am as desirous of being a good neighbor as I am of being a bad subject; and as for supporting schools, I am doing my part to educate my fellow-countrymen now. It is for no particular item in the tax-bill that I refuse to pay it. I simply wish to refuse allegiance to the State, to withdraw and stand aloof from it effectually. I do not care to trace the course of my dollar, if I could, till it buys a man or a musket to shoot one with,—the dollar is innocent,—but I am concerned to trace the 40

36. "My Prisons"—The allusion is to a famous book by Silvio Pellico (1788-1854), Italian poet and dramatist, entitled *Le mie prigioni* (1832), detailing the story of his arrest and imprisonment by the tyrannical Austrian Government.

effects of my allegiance. In fact, I quietly declare war with the State, after my fashion, though I will still make what use and get what advantage of her I can, as is usual in such cases.

- If others pay the tax which is demanded of me, from a sympathy with the State, they do but what they have already done in their own case, or rather they abet injustice to a greater extent than the State requires. If they pay the tax from a mistaken interest in the individual taxed, to save his property, or prevent his going to jail, it is because they have not considered wisely how far they let their private feelings interfere with the public good.
- This, then, is my position at present. But one cannot be too much on his guard in such a case, lest his action be biased by obstinacy or an undue regard for the opinions of men. Let him see that he does only what belongs to himself and to the hour.

- I think sometimes, Why, this people mean well, they are only ignorant; they would do better if they knew how: why give your neighbors this pain to treat you as they are not inclined to? But I think again, This is no reason why I should do as they do, or permit others to suffer much greater pain of a different kind. Again, I sometimes say to myself, When many millions of men, without heat, without ill will, without personal feeling of any kind, demand of you a few shillings only, without the possibility, such is their constitution, of retracting or altering their present demand, and without the possibility, on your side, of appeal to any other millions, why expose yourself to this overwhelming brute force? You do not resist cold and hunger, the winds and the waves, thus obstinately; you quietly submit to a thousand similar necessities. You do not put your head into the fire. But just in proportion as I regard this as not wholly a brute force, but partly a human force, and consider that I have relations to those millions as to so many millions of men, and not of mere brute or inanimate things, I see that appeal is possible, first and instantaneously, from them to the Maker of them, and, secondly, from them to themselves. But if I put my head deliberately into the fire, there is no appeal to fire or to the Maker of fire, and I have only myself to blame. If I could convince myself that I have any right to be satisfied with men as they are, and to treat them accordingly, and not according, in some respects, to my requisitions and expectations of what they and I ought to be, then, like a good Mussulman and fatalist, I should endeavor to be satisfied with things as they are, and say it is the will of God. And, above all, there is this difference between resisting this and a purely brute or natural force, that I can resist this with some effect; but I cannot expect, like Orpheus, to change the nature of the rocks and trees and beasts.
- I do not wish to quarrel with any man or nation. I do not wish to split hairs, to make fine distinctions, or set myself up as better than my neighbors. I seek rather, I may say, even an excuse for conforming to the laws of the land. I am but too ready to conform to them. Indeed, I have reason to suspect myself on this head; and each year, as the tax-gatherer comes round, I find myself disposed to review the acts and position of the general and State governments, and the spirit of the people, to discover a pretext for conformity.

"We must affect our country as our parents,  
 And if at any time we alienate  
 Our love or industry from doing it honor,  
 We must respect effects and teach the soul  
 Matter of conscience and religion,  
 And not desire of rule or benefit."

5

I believe that the State will soon be able to take all my work of this sort out of my hands, and then I shall be no better a patriot than my fellow-countrymen. Seen from a lower point of view, the Constitution, with all its faults, is very good; the law and the courts are very respectable; even this State and this American government are, in many respects, very admirable, and rare things, to be thankful for, such as a great many have described them; but seen from a point of view a little higher, they are what I have described them; seen from a higher still, and the highest, who shall say what they are, or that they are worth looking at or thinking of at all?

15

However, the government does not concern me much, and I shall bestow the fewest possible thoughts on it. It is not many moments that I live under a government, even in this world. If a man is thought-free, fancy-free, imagination-free, that which *is not* never for a long time appearing *to be* to him, unwise rulers or reformers cannot fatally interrupt him.

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I know that most men think differently from myself; but those whose lives are by profession devoted to the study of these or kindred subjects content me as little as any. Statesmen and legislators, standing so completely within the institution, never distinctly and nakedly behold it. They speak of moving society, but have no resting-place without it. They may be men of a certain experience and discrimination, and have no doubt invented ingenious and even useful systems, for which we sincerely thank them; but all their wit and usefulness lie within certain not very wide limits. They are wont to forget that the world is not governed by policy and expediency. Webster never goes behind government, and so cannot speak with authority about it. His words are wisdom to those legislators who contemplate no essential reform in the existing government; but for thinkers, and those who legislate for all time, he never once glances at the subject. I know of those whose serene and wise speculations on this theme would soon reveal the limits of his mind's range and hospitality. Yet, compared with the cheap professions of most reformers, and the still cheaper wisdom and eloquence of politicians in general, his are almost the only sensible and valuable words, and we thank Heaven for him. Comparatively, he is always strong, original, and, above all, practical. Still, his quality is not wisdom, but prudence. The lawyer's truth is not Truth, but consistency or a consistent expediency. Truth is always in harmony with herself, and is not concerned chiefly to reveal the justice that may consist with wrong-doing. He well deserves to be called, as he has been called, the Defender of the Constitution. There are really no blows to be given by him but defensive ones. He is not a leader, but a follower. His leaders are the men of '87.

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42-43. **Defender . . . Constitution**—The phrase particularly followed upon Webster's second speech on Foote's Resolution—the so-called Reply to Hayne (1830). 44. **men of '87**—the fathers of the Constitution. The Constitution was completed and submitted to the several states in 1787.

"I have never made an effort," he says, "and never propose to make an effort; I have never countenanced an effort, and never mean to countenance an effort, to disturb the arrangement as originally made, by which the various States came into the Union." Still thinking of the sanction which the Constitution gives to slavery, he says, "Because it was a part of the original compact,—  
 5 let it stand." Notwithstanding his special acuteness and ability, he is unable to take a fact out of its merely political relations, and behold it as it lies absolutely to be disposed of by the intellect,—what, for instance, it behooves a man to do here in America to-day with regard to slavery,—but ventures, or is  
 10 driven, to make some such desperate answer as the following, while professing to speak absolutely, and as a private man,—from which what new and singular code of social duties might be inferred? "The manner," says he, "in which the governments of those States where slavery exists are to regulate it is for their own consideration, under their responsibility to their constituents, to the general  
 15 laws of propriety, humanity, and justice, and to God. Associations formed elsewhere, springing from a feeling of humanity, or any other cause, have nothing whatever to do with it. They have never received any encouragement from me, and they never will."

They who know of no purer sources of truth, who have traced up its stream  
 20 no higher, stand, and wisely stand, by the Bible and the Constitution, and drink at it there with reverence and humility; but they who behold where it comes trickling into this lake or that pool, gird up their loins once more, and continue their pilgrimage toward its fountain-head.

No man with a genius for legislation has appeared in America. They are rare  
 25 in the history of the world. There are orators, politicians, and eloquent men, by the thousand; but the speaker has not yet opened his mouth to speak who is capable of settling the much-vexed questions of the day. We love eloquence for its own sake, and not for any truth which it may utter, or any heroism it may inspire. Our legislators have not yet learned the comparative value of  
 30 free trade and of freedom, of union, and of rectitude, to a nation. They have no genius or talent for comparatively humble questions of taxation and finance, commerce and manufactures and agriculture. If we were left solely to the wordy wit of legislators in Congress for our guidance, uncorrected by the seasonable experience and the effectual complaints of the people, America  
 35 would not long retain her rank among the nations. For eighteen hundred years, though perchance I have no right to say it, the New Testament has been written; yet where is the legislator who has wisdom and practical talent enough to avail himself of the light which it sheds on the science of legisla-  
 tion?

40 The authority of government, even such as I am willing to submit to,—for I will cheerfully obey those who know and can do better than I, and in many things even those who neither know nor can do so well,—is still an impure one: to be strictly just, it must have the sanction and consent of the governed.

1. "I have never made . . ."—The quotations are from a speech by Webster on the Texas question, delivered Dec. 22, 1845, and may be found in the National edition of his *Writings*, Vol. IX, p. 57. 12-18. "The manner . . . will"—from a speech by Webster on the bill to exclude slavery from the territories, delivered Aug. 12, 1848. See *Writings*, Vol. X, p. 38. 18. will—"These extracts have been inserted since the lecture was read." (Thoreau's note)

It can have no pure right over my person and property but what I concede to it. The progress from an absolute to a limited monarchy, from a limited monarchy to a democracy, is a progress toward a true respect for the individual. Even the Chinese philosopher was wise enough to regard the individual as the basis of the empire. Is a democracy, such as we know it, the last improvement possible in government? Is it not possible to take a step further towards recognizing and organizing the rights of man? There will never be a really free and enlightened State until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly. I please myself with imagining a State at last which can afford to be just to all men, and to treat the individual with respect as a neighbor; which even would not think it inconsistent with its own repose if a few were to live aloof from it, not meddling with it, nor embraced by it, who fulfilled all the duties of neighbors and fellow-men. A State which bore this kind of fruit, and suffered it to drop off as fast as it ripened, would prepare the way for a still more perfect and glorious State, which also I have imagined, but not yet anywhere seen.

## WALDEN

*Walden* was published in 1854. The original manuscript was destroyed, but F. B. Sanborn edited for The Bibliophile Society (Boston, 1909, 2 vols.) another manuscript which turned up at the end of the last century, and which was thought to be nearer the original form. From the introduction to this edition it appears that about twelve thousand words were omitted in the 1854 edition, probably by the publisher. Nevertheless, it has been thought best to reprint the text of 1854 in the following extracts in view of Sanborn's doubtful repute as editor.

It is important to note that Mr. Sanborn has discovered how freely Thoreau transferred material back and forth in making up *Walden*, the events of which are supposed to take place between March, 1845, and September, 1847. Close inspection of Thoreau's journals shows that he extracted material in them from between 1838 and 1854, and used it in *Walden*. For example, the battle of the ants in *Walden* is supposed to take place in 1845; but it is described in the journal for January, 1852; and similarly the adventure with the loon appears in the journal under date of October 8, 1852.

Walden Pond is about two miles southeast of Concord, and is about one-half mile wide at its broadest point. The Fitchburg Railroad skirts the southwest side of the pond. The land on which Thoreau "squatted" belonged to Emerson. For his building Thoreau borrowed an ax from Alcott, which he returned, he says, sharper than he found it. He bought the lumber for his shack from an Irishman, who had used it for a shanty; and the total cost of his building was \$28.12½. A group of friends helped him to erect it—Alcott, Emerson, Ellery Channing, George Curtis, Burrill Curtis, Edmund Hosmer, and Hosmer's three sons, John, Edmund, and Andrew. It must not be thought that Thoreau lived an isolated life at Walden; he frequently made trips into Concord (on one of which he was arrested), and sometimes went on longer journeys; and he was visited by a number of friends and curious strangers.

The first section of *Walden* in the original edition, entitled "Economy," explains

what Thoreau wanted to do, how he built his shack, and how he lived. He sets forth his purpose in section 11. When he had satisfied himself, he quit Walden Pond and returned to Concord.

#### WHERE I LIVED, AND WHAT I LIVED FOR

**A**T A certain season of our life we are accustomed to consider every spot as the possible site of a house. I have thus surveyed the country on every side within a dozen miles of where I live. In imagination I have bought all the farms in succession, for all were to be bought, and I knew their price. I walked over each farmer's premises, tasted his wild apples, discoursed on husbandry with him, took his farm at his price, at any price, mortgaging it to him in my mind; even put a higher price on it,—took everything but a deed of it,—took his word for his deed, for I dearly love to talk,—cultivated it, and him too to some extent, I trust, and withdrew when I had enjoyed it long enough, leaving him to carry it on. This experience entitled me to be regarded as a sort of real-estate broker by my friends. Wherever I sat, there I might live, and the landscape radiated from me accordingly. What is a house but a *sedes*, a seat?—better if a country seat. I discovered many a site for a house not likely to be soon improved, which some might have thought too far from the village, but to my eyes the village was too far from it. Well, there I might live, I said; and there I did live, for an hour, a summer and a winter life; saw how I could let the years run off, buffet the winter through, and see the spring come in. The future inhabitants of this region, wherever they may place their houses, may be sure that they have been anticipated. An afternoon sufficed to lay out the land into orchard, wood lot, and pasture, and to decide what fine oaks or pines should be left to stand before the door, and whence each blasted tree could be seen to the best advantage; and then I let it lie, fallow perchance, for a man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone.

My imagination carried me so far that I even had the refusal of several farms,—the refusal was all I wanted,—but I never got my fingers burned by actual possession. The nearest that I came to actual possession was when I bought the Hollowell place, and had begun to sort my seeds, and collected materials with which to make a wheelbarrow to carry it on or off with; but before the owner gave me a deed of it, his wife—every man has such a wife—changed her mind and wished to keep it, and he offered me ten dollars to release him. Now, to speak the truth, I had but ten cents in the world, and it surpassed my arithmetic to tell, if I was the man who had ten cents, or who  
 35 had a farm, or ten dollars, or all together. However, I let him keep the ten dollars and the farm too, for I had carried it far enough; or rather, to be generous, I sold him the farm for just what I gave for it, and, as he was not a rich man, made him a present of ten dollars, and still had my ten cents, and seeds, and materials for a wheelbarrow left. I found thus that I had been a  
 40 rich man without any damage to my poverty. But I retained the landscape,

14. I discovered—The Bibliophile edition begins a new paragraph here. 29. Hollowell place—This house stood back from the road to Nine-Acre Corner, and faced the Musketaquid River. Thoreau knew it from boyhood.

and I have since annually carried off what it yielded without a wheelbarrow.  
With respect to landscapes,—

“I am monarch of all I *survey*,  
My right there is none to dispute.”

I have frequently seen a poet withdraw, having enjoyed the most valuable 5  
part of a farm, while the crusty farmer supposed that he had got a few wild  
apples only. Why, the owner does not know it for many years when a poet has  
put his farm in rhyme, the most admirable kind of invisible fence, has fairly im-  
pounded it, milked it, skimmed it, and got all the cream, and left the farmer  
only the skimmed milk. 10

The real attractions of the Hollowell farm, to me, were, its complete retire-  
ment, being about two miles from the village, half a mile from the nearest  
neighbor, and separated from the highway by a broad field; its bounding  
on the river, which the owner said protected it by its fogs from frosts in the  
spring, though that was nothing to me; the gray color and ruinous state of 15  
the house and barn, and the dilapidated fences, which put such an interval  
between me and the last occupant; the hollow and lichen-covered apple trees,  
gnawed by rabbits, showing what kind of neighbors I should have; but above  
all, the recollection I had of it from my earliest voyages up the river, when the  
house was concealed behind a dense grove of red maples, through which I 20  
heard the house-dog bark. I was in haste to buy it, before the proprietor finished  
getting out some rocks, cutting down the hollow apple trees, and grubbing up  
some young birches which had sprung up in the pasture, or, in short, had  
made any more of his improvements. To enjoy these advantages, I was ready  
to carry it on; like Atlas, to take the world on my shoulders,—I never heard 25  
what compensation he received for that,—and do all those things which had  
no other motive or excuse but that I might pay for it and be unmolested in my  
possession of it; for I knew all the while that it would yield the most abundant  
crop of the kind I wanted, if I could only afford to let it alone. But it turned out  
as I have said. 30

All that I could say, then, with respect to farming on a large scale (I have  
always cultivated a garden,) was, that I had had my seeds ready. Many think  
that seeds improve with age. I have no doubt that time discriminates between  
the good and the bad; and when at last I shall plant, I shall be less likely to  
be disappointed. But I would say to my fellows, once for all, As long as possible 35  
live free and uncommitted. It makes but little difference whether you are com-  
mitted to a farm or the county jail.

Old Cato, whose “*De Re Rusticâ*” is my “cultivator,” says, and the only trans-  
lation I have seen makes sheer nonsense of the passage, “When you think of

3-4. “I . . . dispute”—The quotation is from Cowper’s poem, “Imaginary Verses of Alexander Selkirk.” (Selkirk was the original of Robinson Crusoe.) Note the pun on Thoreau’s own occupation. 19. *voyages*—the trip with John Thoreau described in *A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers* (1849). 25. *Atlas*—a Titan in Greek mythology, condemned to stand at the western extremity of the earth and hold up the heavens with his shoulders and hands. The Bibliophile edition begins a new paragraph with this sentence. 38. *Cato*—Marcus Porcius Cato (234-149 B.C.), Roman statesman, writer, and general. The *De Re Rusticâ* has to do with farm management. In the Bibliophile edition the quotation is given in Latin, and Thoreau says that “the learned Oxford translator . . . makes sheer nonsense of the passage.”



getting a farm, turn it thus in your mind, not to buy greedily; nor spare your pains to look at it, and do not think it enough to go round it once. The oftener you go there the more it will please you, if it is good." I think I shall not buy greedily, but go round and round it as long as I live, and be buried in it first,  
 5 that it may please me the more at last.

The present was my next experiment of this kind, which I purpose to describe more at length; for convenience, putting the experience of two years into one. As I have said, I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my  
 10 neighbors up.

When first I took up my abode in the woods, that is, began to spend my nights as well as days there, which, by accident, was on Independence day, or the fourth of July, 1845, my house was not finished for winter, but was merely a defence against the rain, without plastering or chimney, the walls being of  
 15 rough, weather-stained boards, with wide chinks, which made it cool at night. The upright white hewn studs and freshly planed door and window casings gave it a clean and airy look, especially in the morning, when its timbers were saturated with dew, so that I fancied that by noon some sweet gum would exude from them. To my imagination it retained throughout the day  
 20 more or less of this <sup>auroral</sup> ~~auroral~~ character, reminding me of a certain house on a mountain which I had visited a year before. This was an airy and unplastered cabin, fit to entertain a travelling god, and where a goddess might trail her garments. The winds which passed over my dwelling were such as sweep over the ridges of mountains, bearing the broken strains, or celestial parts only, of  
 25 terrestrial music. The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted; but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth every where.

The only house I had been the owner of before, if I except a boat, was a tent, which I used occasionally when making excursions in the summer, and this is  
 30 still rolled up in my garret; but the boat, after passing from hand to hand, has gone down the stream of time. With this more substantial shelter about me, I had made some progress towards settling in the world. This frame, so slightly clad, was a sort of crystallization around me, and reacted on the builder. It was suggestive somewhat as a picture in outlines. I did not need to go out doors  
 35 to take the air, for the atmosphere within had lost none of its freshness. It was not so much within doors as behind a door where I sat, even in the rainiest weather. The Harivansa says, "An abode without birds is like a meat without seasoning." Such was not my abode, for I found myself suddenly neighbor to the birds; not by having imprisoned one, but having caged myself near them.

8. ode to dejection—The reference is to Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Dejection: An Ode."  
 20. auroral—bright, roseate with dawn. 28. tent—the tent which Thoreau and his brother used on the trip described in the *Week*. 31. With this—The Bibliophile edition here makes a new paragraph. 34. outlines—The Bibliophile edition (which here prints "outline") appends a long note to show the change between the original MS. and the printed version in this passage. 37. Harivansa—a Sanskrit poem of over sixteen thousand verses, purporting to be part of the great epic, the *Mahabharata*, but of later date. It tells of the creation, the dynasties of the gods, the life of Krishna, and the future of the world.

I was not only nearer to some of those which commonly frequent the garden and the orchard, but to those wilder and more thrilling songsters of the forest which never, or rarely, serenade a villager,—the wood-thrush, the veery, the scarlet tanager, the field-sparrow, the whippoorwill, and many others.

I was seated by the shore of a small pond, about a mile and a half south of the village of Concord and somewhat higher than it, in the midst of an extensive wood between that town and Lincoln, and about two miles south of that our only field known to fame, Concord Battle Ground; but I was so low in the woods that the opposite shore, half a mile off, like the rest, covered with wood, was my most distant horizon. For the first week, whenever I looked out on the pond it impressed me like a tarn high up on the side of a mountain, its bottom far above the surface of other lakes, and, as the sun arose, I saw it throwing off its nightly clothing of mist, and here and there, by degrees, its soft ripples or its smooth reflecting surface was revealed, while the mists, like ghosts, were stealthily withdrawing in every direction into the woods, as at the breaking up of some nocturnal conventicle. The very dew seemed to hang upon the trees later into the day than usual, as on the sides of mountains.

This small lake was of most value as a neighbor in the intervals of a gentle rain storm in August, when, both air and water being perfectly still, but the sky overcast, mid-afternoon had all the serenity of evening, and the wood-thrush sang around, and was heard from shore to shore. A lake like this is never smoother than at such a time; and the clear portion of the air above it being shallow and darkened by clouds, the water, full of light and reflections, becomes a lower heaven itself so much the more important. From a hill top near by, where the wood had been recently cut off, there was a pleasing vista southward across the pond, through a wide indentation in the hills which form the shore there, where their opposite sides sloping toward each other suggested a stream flowing out in that direction through a wooded valley, but stream there was none. That way I looked between and over the near green hills to some distant and higher ones in the horizon, tinged with blue. Indeed, by standing on tiptoe I could catch a glimpse of some of the peaks of the still bluer and more distant mountain ranges in the north-west, those true-blue coins from heaven's own mint, and also of some portion of the village. But in other directions, even from this point, I could not see over or beyond the woods which surrounded me. It is well to have some water in your neighborhood, to give buoyancy to and float the earth. One value even of the smallest well is, that when you look into it you see that earth is not continent but insular. This is as important as that it keeps butter cool. When I looked across the pond from this peak toward the Sudbury meadows, which in time of flood I distinguished elevated perhaps by a mirage in their seething valley, like a coin in a basin, all the earth beyond the pond appeared like a thin crust insulated and floated even by this small sheet of intervening water, and I was reminded that this on which I dwelt was but *dry land*.

7. **Lincoln**—on the Sudbury road. 8. **Concord Battle**—fought April 19, 1775. 24. **From a hill**—In the Bibliophile edition a new paragraph begins here. 35. **It is well**—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition. 39. **Sudbury meadows**—Sanborn says that Thoreau's favorite walk was along the Marlborough Road west and southwest from Concord, through the deep woods along the Sudbury River which flows into the Assabet River to form the Concord River.

Though the view from my door was still more contracted, I did not feel crowded or confined in the least. There was pasture enough for my imagination. The low shrub-oak plateau to which the opposite shore arose, stretched away toward the prairies of the West and the steppes of Tartary, affording ample  
 5 room for all the roving families of men. "There are none happy in the world but beings who enjoy freely a vast horizon,"—said Damodara, when his herds required new and larger pastures.

Both place and time were changed, and I dwelt nearer to those parts of the universe and to those eras in history which had most attracted me. Where I  
 10 lived was as far off as many a region viewed nightly by astronomers. We are wont to imagine rare and delectable places in some remote and more celestial corner of the system, behind the constellation of Cassiopeia's Chair, far from noise and disturbance. I discovered that my house actually had its site in such a withdrawn, but forever new and unprofaned, part of the universe. If it were  
 15 worth the while to settle in those parts near to the Pleiades or the Hyades, to Aldebaran or Altair, then I was really there, or at an equal remoteness from the life which I had left behind, dwindled and twinkling with as fine a ray to my nearest neighbor, and to be seen only in moonless nights by him. Such was that part of creation where I had squatted;—

20 "There was a shepherd that did live,  
 And held his thoughts as high  
 As were the mounts whereon his flocks  
 Did hourly feed him by."

What should we think of the shepherd's life if his flocks always wandered  
 25 to higher pastures than his thoughts?

- Every morning was a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity, and I may say innocence, with Nature herself. I have been as sincere a worshipper of Aurora as the Greeks. I got up early and bathed in the pond; that was a religious exercise, and one of the best things which I did. They say that  
 30 characters were engraven on the bathing tub of king Tching-thang to this effect: "Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again, and forever again." I can understand that. Morning brings back the heroic ages. I was as much affected by the faint hum of a mosquito making its invisible and unimaginable tour through my apartment at earliest dawn, when I was sitting with door and  
 35 windows open, as I could be by any trumpet that ever sang of fame. It was Homer's requiem; itself an Iliad and Odyssey in the air, singing its own wrath and wanderings. There was something cosmical about it; a standing advertisement, till forbidden, of the everlasting vigor and fertility of the world. The morning, which is the most memorable season of the day, is the awakening

6. **Damodara**—Damodara Misra, an eleventh-century Sanskrit poet. 12. **Cassiopeia's Chair**—a constellation of thirty larger stars supposed to represent the wife of Cepheus and the mother of Andromeda. 15. **Pleiades**—a group of smaller stars in the constellation Taurus. 15. **Hyades**—constellation named for the nymphs who nursed Zeus. 16. **Aldebaran**—the most conspicuous star in the Hyades group. 16. **Altair**—a first-magnitude star in the constellation, Aquila. 28. **Aurora**—the Greek goddess of dawn. 32. **Morning**—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition. 36-37. **wrath and wanderings**—The point is that the Iliad sings the wrath of Achilles, the Odyssey the wanderings of Odysseus. 38-39. **The morning**—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition.

hour. Then there is least somnolence in us; and for an hour, at least, some part of us awakes which slumbers all the rest of the day and night. Little is to be expected of that day, if it can be called a day, to which we are not awakened by our Genius, but by the mechanical nudgings of some servitor, are not awakened by our own newly-acquired force and aspirations from within, accompanied by the undulations of celestial music, instead of factory bells, and a fragrance filling the air—to a higher life than we fell asleep from; and thus the darkness bear its fruit, and prove itself to be good, no less than the light. That man who does not believe that each day contains an earlier, more sacred, and auroral hour than he has yet profaned, has despaired of life, and is pursuing a descending and darkening way. After a partial cessation of his sensuous life, the soul of man, or its organs rather, are reinvigorated each day, and his Genius tries again what noble life it can make. All memorable events, I should say, transpire in morning time and in a morning atmosphere. The Vedas say, “All intelligences awake with the morning.” Poetry and art, and the fairest and most memorable of the actions of men, date from such an hour. All poets and heroes, like Memnon, are the children of Aurora, and emit their music at sunrise. To him whose elastic and vigorous thought keeps pace with the sun, the day is a perpetual morning. It matters not what the clocks say or the attitudes and labors of men. Morning is when I am awake and there is a dawn in me. Moral reform is the effort to throw off sleep. Why is it that men give so poor an account of their day if they have not been slumbering? They are not such poor calculators. If they had not been overcome with drowsiness they would have performed something. The millions are awake enough for physical labor; but only one in a million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion, only one in a hundred millions to a poetic or divine life. To be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake. How could I have looked him in the face?

We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep. I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor. It is something to be able to paint a particular picture, or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful; but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look, which morally we can do. To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts. Every man is tasked to make his life, even in its details, worthy of the contemplation of his most elevated and critical hour. If we refused, or rather used up, such paltry information as we get, the oracles would distinctly inform us how this might be done.

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the

4. **Genius**—guardian spirit, supposed to guide and govern an individual. 8. **That**—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition. 13. **All memorable**—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition. 14. **transpire**—become known. 14. **The Vedas**—the sacred literature, in four parts, of the Hindus. 17. **Memnon**—The statues of Memnon at Thebes were so named because Memnon was supposed to be the son of the Dawn, and, when reached by the rays of the rising sun, these statues gave forth a musical chord. 20. **Morning is**—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition. 36. **To affect**—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition. 40 ff. **I went . . . forever**—In the Bibliophile edition, this passage does not appear here, but earlier in the text.

essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practise resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved it to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. For most men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it, whether it is of the devil or of God, and have *somewhat hastily* concluded that it is the chief end of man here to "glorify God and enjoy him forever."

Still we live meanly, like ants; though the fable tells us that we were long ago changed into men; like pygmies we fight with cranes; it is error upon error, and clout upon clout, and our best virtue has for its occasion a superfluous and evitable wretchedness. Our life is frittered away by detail. An honest man has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers, or in extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumb nail. In the midst of this chopping sea of civilized life, such are the clouds and storms and quicksands and thousand-and-one items to be allowed for, that a man has to live, if he would not founder and go to the bottom and not make his port at all, by dead reckoning, and he must be a great calculator indeed who succeeds. Simplify, simplify. Instead of three meals a day, if it be necessary eat but one; instead of a hundred dishes, five; and reduce other things in proportion. Our life is like a German Confederacy, made up of petty states, with its boundary forever fluctuating, so that even a German cannot tell you how it is bounded at any moment. The nation itself, with all its so called internal improvements, which, by the way, are all external and superficial, is just such an unwieldy and overgrown establishment, cluttered with furniture and tripped up by its own traps, ruined by luxury and heedless expense, by want of calculation and a worthy aim, as the million households in the land; and the only cure for it as for them is in a rigid economy, a stern and more than Spartan simplicity of life and elevation of purpose. It lives too fast. Men think that it is essential that the *Nation* have commerce, and export ice, and talk through a telegraph, and ride thirty miles an hour, without a doubt, whether *they* do or not; but whether we should live like baboons or like men, is a little uncertain. If we do not get out sleepers, and forge rails, and devote days and

5. **Spartan-like**—The ancient Spartans were subjected to a rigid physical regimen. 12-13. "**glorify . . . forever**"—from the Westminster Catechism—the chief end of man. 14. **fable**—In Greek story, the battle of the cranes and the pygmies is famous. 17. **Our life**—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition. After "detail" the following sentence appears: "Its dish consists almost entirely of 'fixings,' and very little of the chickens' meat." 26. **Simplify**—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition. 28. **German Confederacy**—After 1815 the German states were united in a loose confederacy, which proved impractical as a form of union. 36. **fast**—Here the Bibliophile edition inserts fourteen lines ironically discussing the social philosophy of Fourier. 40. **sleepers**—railway ties.

nights to the work, but go to tinkering upon our *lives* to improve *them*, who will build railroads? And if railroads are not built, how shall we get to heaven in season? But if we stay at home and mind our business, who will want railroads? We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us. Did you ever think what those sleepers are that underlie the railroad? Each one is a man, an Irishman, or a Yankee man. The rails are laid on them, and they are covered with sand, and the cars run smoothly over them. They are sound sleepers, I assure you. And every few years a new lot is laid down and run over; so that, if some have the pleasure of riding on a rail, others have the misfortune to be ridden upon. And when they run over a man that is walking in his sleep, a supernumerary sleeper in the wrong position, and wake him up, they suddenly stop the cars, and make a hue and cry about it, as if this were an exception. I am glad to know that it takes a gang of men for every five miles to keep the sleepers down and level in their beds as it is, for this is a sign that they may sometime get up again.

Why should we live with such hurry and waste of life? We are determined to be starved before we are hungry. Men say that a stitch in time saves nine, and so they take a thousand stitches to-day to save nine to-morrow. As for *work*, we haven't any of any consequence. We have the Saint Vitus' dance, and cannot possibly keep our heads still. If I should only give a few pulls at the parish bell-rope, as for a fire, that is, without setting the bell, there is hardly a man on his farm in the outskirts of Concord, notwithstanding that press of engagements which was his excuse so many times this morning, nor a boy, nor a woman, I might almost say, but would forsake all and follow that sound, not mainly to save property from the flames, but, if we will confess the truth, much more to see it burn, since burn it must, and we, be it known, did not set it on fire,—or to see it put out, and have a hand in it, if that is done as handsomely; yes, even if it were the parish church itself. Hardly a man takes a half hour's nap after dinner, but when he wakes he holds up his head and asks, "What's the news?" as if the rest of mankind had stood his sentinels. Some give directions to be waked every half hour, doubtless for no other purpose; and then, to pay for it, they tell what they have dreamed. After a night's sleep the news is as indispensable as the breakfast. "Pray tell me any thing new that has happened to a man anywhere on this globe,"—and he reads it over his coffee and rolls, that a man has had his eyes gouged out this morning on the Wachito River; never dreaming the while that he lives in the dark unfathomed mammoth cave of this world, and has but the rudiment of an eye himself.

For my part, I could easily do without the post-office. I think that there are very few important communications made through it. To speak critically, I never received more than one or two letters in my life—I wrote this some years ago—that were worth the postage. The penny-post is, commonly, an institution through which you seriously offer a man that penny for his thoughts which is

5. *Irishman*—The building of railways led to an invasion of Concord by Irish laborers in the forties. 19. *Saint Vitus' dance*—chorea. 21. *fire*—to summon the volunteer fire department, but not to pull the bell upside down. 28. *Hardly*—Here the Bibliophile edition begins a new paragraph. 35-36. *Wachito River*—the Ouachita River in Arkansas, then the frontier, where "gouging" was a characteristic mode of physical combat. 41. *penny-post*—introduced in England in 1840 by Sir Rowland Hill.

so often safely offered in jest. And I am sure that I never read any memorable news in a newspaper. If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog  
 5 killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter,—we never need read of another. One is enough. If you are acquainted with the principle, what do you care for a myriad instances and applications? To a philosopher all *news*, as it is called, is gossip, and they who edit and read it are old women over their tea. Yet not a few are greedy after this gossip. There was such a rush, as I hear, the other day  
 10 at one of the offices to learn the foreign news by the last arrival, that several large squares of plate glass belonging to the establishment were broken by the pressure,—news which I seriously think a ready wit might write a twelvemonth or twelve years beforehand with sufficient accuracy. As for Spain, for instance, if you know how to throw in Don Carlos and the Infanta and Don Pedro and  
 15 Seville and Granada, from time to time in the right proportions,—they may have changed the names a little since I saw the papers,—and serve up a bull-fight when other entertainments fail, it will be true to the letter, and give us as good an idea of the exact state or ruin of things in Spain as the most succinct and lucid reports under this head in the newspapers: and as for England,  
 20 almost the last significant scrap of news from that quarter was the revolution of 1649; and if you have learned the history of her crops for an average year, you never need attend to that thing again, unless your speculations are of a merely pecuniary character. If one may judge who rarely looks into the newspapers, nothing new does ever happen in foreign parts, a French revolution not  
 25 excepted.

What news! how much more important to know what that is which was never old! “Kieou-he-yu (great dignitary of the state of Wei) sent a man to Khoung-tseu to know his news. Khoung-tseu caused the messenger to be seated near him, and questioned him in these terms: What is your master  
 30 doing? The messenger answered with respect: My master desires to diminish the number of his faults, but he cannot come to the end of them. The messenger being gone, the philosopher remarked: What a worthy messenger! What a worthy messenger!” The preacher, instead of vexing the ears of drowsy farmers on their day of rest at the end of the week,—for Sunday is the fit  
 35 conclusion of an ill-spent week, and not the fresh and brave beginning of a new one,—with this one other draggle-tail of a sermon, should shout with thundering voice,—“Pause! Avast! Why so seeming fast, but deadly slow?”

~~Shams~~ and delusions are esteemed for soundest truths, while reality is fabulous. If men would steadily observe realities only, and not allow themselves  
 40 to be deluded, life, to compare it with such things as we know, would be like

2. If we—new paragraph in the Bibliophile edition. 4. Western Railroad—now the Boston and Maine, running from Boston to Albany, through Fitchburg. 8. tea—The Bibliophile edition here inserts two sentences humorously denouncing Uncle Sam for carrying unimportant information in the mails. 13. As for—Here the Bibliophile edition begins a new paragraph. 14. Don Carlos . . . Don Pedro—the principal figures in the Civil War then raging in Spain between the Carlistas and the followers of the Queen. Seville and Granada are principal Spanish cities concerned in the war. 20. revolution—when the parliamentarians rose against Charles I. 24. French revolution—Thoreau notes (in the Bibliophile edition) that this was written before the French Revolution of 1848, but “a revolution in France might be expected any day.” 27-28. “Kieou-he-yu . . . messenger”—from the *Analects* of Confucius, XIV, 26, 1-2. 33. The preacher—Here the Bibliophile edition begins a new paragraph.

a fairy tale and the Arabian Nights' Entertainments. If we respected only what is inevitable and has a right to be, music and poetry would resound along the streets. When we are unhurried and wise, we perceive that only great and worthy things have any permanent and absolute existence,—that petty fears and petty pleasures are but the shadow of the reality. This is always exhilarating and sublime. By closing the eyes and slumbering, and consenting to be deceived by shows, men establish and confirm their daily life of routine and habit every where, which still is built on purely illusory foundations. Children, who play life, discern its true law and relations more clearly than men, who fail to live it worthily, but who think that they are wiser by experience, that is, by failure. I have read in a Hindoo book, that "there was a king's son, who, being expelled in infancy from his native city, was brought up by a forester, and, growing up to maturity in that state, imagined himself to belong to the barbarous race with which he lived. One of his father's ministers having discovered him, revealed to him what he was, and the misconception of his character was removed, and he knew himself to be a prince. So the soul," continues the Hindoo philosopher, "from the circumstances in which it is placed, mistakes its own character, until the truth is revealed to it by some holy teacher, and then it knows itself to be *Brahme*." I perceive that we inhabitants of New England live this mean life that we do because our vision does not penetrate the surface of things. We think that that *is* which *appears* to be. If a man should walk through this town and see only the reality, where, think you, would the "Mill-dam" go to? If he should give us an account of the realities he beheld there, we should not recognize the place in his description. Look at a meeting-house, or a court-house, or a jail, or a shop, or a dwelling-house, and say what that thing really is before a true gaze, and they would all go to pieces in your account of them. Men esteem truth remote, in the outskirts of the system, behind the farthest star, before Adam and after the last man. In eternity there is indeed something true and sublime. But all these times and places and occasions are now and here. God himself culminates in the present moment, and will never be more divine in the lapse of all the ages. And we are enabled to apprehend at all what is sublime and noble only by the perpetual instilling and drenching of the reality that surrounds us. The universe constantly and obediently answers to our conceptions; whether we travel fast or slow, the track is laid for us. Let us spend our lives in conceiving then. The poet or the artist never yet had so fair and noble a design but some of his posterity at least could accomplish it.

Let us spend one day as deliberately as Nature, and not be thrown off the track by every nutshell and mosquito's wing that falls on the rails. Let us rise early and fast, or break fast, gently and without perturbation; let company come and let company go, let the bells ring and the children cry,—determined to make a day of it. Why should we knock under and go with the stream? Let us not be upset and overwhelmed in that terrible rapid and whirlpool called a dinner, situated in the meridian shallows. Weather this danger and you are safe, for the rest of the way is down hill. With unrelaxed nerves, with morning

1. **If we**—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition. 8. **Children**—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition. 19. **I perceive**—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition. 22. "Mill-dam"—In the Bibliophile edition, this reads "State Street," apparently with reference to Boston. 27. **Men esteem**—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition. 33. **The universe**—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition.



- vigor, sail by it, looking another way, tied to the mast like Ulysses. If the engine whistles, let it whistle till it is hoarse for its pains. If the bell rings, why should we run? We will consider what kind of music they are like. Let us settle ourselves, and work and wedge our feet downward through the mud and
- 5 slush of opinion, and prejudice, and tradition, and delusion, and appearance, that alluvion which covers the globe, through Paris and London, through New York and Boston and Concord, through church and state, through poetry and philosophy and religion, till we come to a hard bottom and rocks in place, which we can call *reality*, and say, This is, and no mistake; and then begin,
- 10 having a *point d'appui*, below freshet and frost and fire, a place where you might found a wall or a state, or set a lamp-post safely, or perhaps a gauge, not a Nilometer, but a Realometer, that future ages might know how deep a freshet of shams and appearances had gathered from time to time. If you stand right fronting and face to face to a fact, you will see the sun glimmer on both
- 15 its surfaces, as if it were a cimeter, and feel its sweet edge dividing you through the heart and marrow, and so you will happily conclude your mortal career. Be it life or death, we crave only reality. If we are really dying, let us hear the rattle in our throats and feel cold in the extremities; if we are alive, let us go about our business.
- 20 Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains. I would drink deeper; fish in the sky, whose bottom is pebbly with stars. I cannot count one. I know not the first letter of the alphabet. I have always been regretting that I was not as wise as the day I was born.
- 25 The intellect is a cleaver; it discerns and rifts its way into the secret of things. I do not wish to be any more busy with my hands than is necessary. My head is hands and feet. I feel all my best faculties concentrated in it. My instinct tells me that my head is an organ for burrowing, as some creatures use their snout and fore-paws, and with it I would mine and burrow my way through
- 30 these hills. I think that the richest vein is somewhere hereabouts; so by the divining rod and thin rising vapors I judge; and here I will begin to mine.

## BRUTE NEIGHBORS

This forms the twelfth section of the 1854 edition. The "companion" (the Poet of the little dialogue) is generally supposed to be Ellery Channing. Thoreau is, of course, the Hermit.

SOMETIMES I had a companion in my fishing, who came through the village to my house from the other side of the town, and the catching of the dinner was as much a social exercise as the eating of it.

- 35 *Hermit.* I wonder what the world is doing now. I have not heard so much as a locust over the sweet-fern these three hours. The pigeons are all asleep

1. tied . . . Ulysses—Cf. *Odyssey*, XII. 3-4. Let us settle—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition. 6. alluvion—deposits of earth left by floods. 10. *point d'appui*—prop. 12. Nilometer—instrument for gauging the height of the Nile. 13. If you stand—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition. 15. cimeter—scimitar.

upon their roosts,—no flutter from them. Was that a farmer's noon horn which sounded from beyond the woods just now? The hands are coming in to boiled salt beef and cider and Indian bread. Why will men worry themselves so? He that does not eat need not work. I wonder how much they have reaped. Who would live there where a body can never think for the barking of Bose? 5 And O, the housekeeping! to keep bright the devil's door-knobs, and scour his tubs this bright day! Better not keep a house. Say, some hollow tree; and then for morning calls and dinner-parties! Only a woodpecker tapping. O, they swarm; the sun is too warm there; they are born too far into life for me. I have water from the spring, and a loaf of brown bread on the shelf.—Hark! 10 I hear a rustling of the leaves. Is it some ill-fed village hound yielding to the instinct of the chase? or the lost pig which is said to be in these woods, whose tracks I saw after the rain? It comes on apace; my sumachs and sweet-briers tremble.—Eh, Mr. Poet is it you? How do you like the world to-day?

*Poet.* See those clouds; how they hang! That's the greatest thing I have seen to-day. There's nothing like it in old paintings, nothing like it in foreign lands, —unless when we were off the coast of Spain. That's a true Mediterranean sky. I thought, as I have my living to get, and have not eaten to-day, that I might go a-fishing. That's the true industry for poets. It is the only trade I have learned. Come, let's along. 20

*Hermit.* I cannot resist. My brown bread will soon be gone. I will go with you gladly soon, but I am just concluding a serious meditation. I think that I am near the end of it. Leave me alone, then, for a while. But that we may not be delayed, you shall be digging the bait meanwhile. Angle-worms are rarely to be met with in these parts, where the soil was never fattened with manure; 25 the race is nearly extinct. The sport of digging the bait is nearly equal to that of catching the fish, when one's appetite is not too keen; and this you may have all to yourself to-day. I would advise you to set in the spade down yonder among the ground-nuts, where you see the johnswort waving. I think that I may warrant you one worm to every three sods you turn up, if you look well 30 in among the roots of the grass, as if you were weeding. Or, if you choose to go farther, it will not be unwise, for I have found the increase of fair bait to be very nearly as the squares of the distances.

*Hermit alone.* Let me see; where was I? Methinks I was nearly in this frame of mind; the world lay about at this angle. Shall I go to heaven or a-fishing? 35 If I should soon bring this meditation to an end, would another so sweet occasion be likely to offer? I was as near being resolved into the essence of things as ever I was in my life. I fear my thoughts will not come back to me. If it would do any good, I would whistle for them. When they make us an offer, is it wise to say, We will think of it? My thoughts have left no track, and I cannot find the path again. What was it that I was thinking of? It was a very 40 hazy day. I will just try these three sentences of Con-fut-see; they may fetch that state about again. I know not whether it was the dumps or a budding ecstasy. Mem. There never is but one opportunity of a kind.

*Poet.* How now, Hermit, is it too soon? I have got just thirteen whole ones, 45

4. He that does—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition. 17. unless . . . sky—Channing is made to speak in reference to his voyage to the Mediterranean in 1846. 42. Con-fut-see—Confucius.

besides several which are imperfect or undersized; but they will do for the smaller fry; they do not cover up the hook so much. Those village worms are quite too large; a shiner may make a meal off one without finding the skewer.

*Hermit.* Well, then let's be off. Shall we to the Concord? There's good sport  
5 there if the water be not too high.

Why do precisely these objects which we behold make a world? Why has man just these species of animals for his neighbors; as if nothing but a house could have filled this crevice? I suspect that Pilpay & Co. have put animals to their best use, for they are all beasts of burden, in a sense, made to carry  
10 some portion of our thoughts.

The mice which haunted my house were not the common ones, which are said to have been introduced into the country, but a wild native kind not found in the village. I sent one to a distinguished naturalist, and it interested him much. When I was building, one of these had its nest underneath the house,  
15 and before I had laid the second floor, and swept out the shavings, would come out regularly at lunch time and pick up the crumbs at my feet. It probably had never seen a man before; and it soon became quite familiar, and would run over my shoes and up my clothes. It could readily ascend the sides of the room by short impulses, like a squirrel, which it resembled in its motions. At  
20 length, as I leaned with my elbow on the bench one day, it ran up my clothes, and along my sleeve, and round and round the paper which held my dinner, while I kept the latter close, and dodged and played at bo-peep with it; and when at last I held still a piece of cheese between my thumb and finger, it came and nibbled it, sitting in my hand, and afterward cleaned its face and  
25 paws, like a fly, and walked away.

A phoebe soon built in my shed, and a robin for protection in a pine which grew against the house. In June the partridge (*Tetrao umbellus*), which is so shy a bird, led her brood past my windows, from the woods in the rear to the front of my house, clucking and calling to them like a hen, and in all her  
30 behavior proving herself the hen of the woods. The young suddenly disperse on your approach, at a signal from the mother, as if a whirlwind had swept them away, and they so exactly resemble the dried leaves and twigs that many a traveller has placed his foot in the midst of a brood, and heard the whir of the old bird as she flew off, and her anxious calls and mewing, or seen her trail  
35 her wings to attract his attention, without suspecting their neighborhood. The parent will sometimes roll and spin round before you in such a dishabille, that you cannot, for a few moments, detect what kind of creature it is. The young squat still and flat, often running their heads under a leaf, and mind only their mother's directions given from a distance, nor will your approach make them run again and betray themselves. You may even tread on  
40 them, or have your eyes on them for a minute, without discovering them. I have held them in my open hand at such a time, and still their only care, obedient to their mother and their instinct, was to squat there without fear or trem-

8. Pilpay & Co.—The reference is to Bilpai, Aesop, and other writers of fables 26. A phoebe—In the Bibliophile edition the sentence about the phoebe is attached to the preceding paragraph, and there follows a discussion of Thoreau's finding a ground bird's nest while plowing.

oling. So perfect is this instinct, that once, when I had laid them on the leaves again, and one accidentally fell on its side, it was found with the rest in exactly the same position ten minutes afterward. They are not callow like the young of most birds, but more perfectly developed and precocious even than chickens. The remarkable adult yet innocent expression of their open and serene eyes is very memorable. All intelligence seems reflected in them. They suggest not merely the purity of infancy, but a wisdom clarified by experience. Such an eye was not born when the bird was, but is coeval with the sky it reflects. The woods do not yield another such a gem. The traveller does not often look into such a limpid well. The ignorant or reckless sportsman often shoots the parent at such a time, and leaves these innocents to fall a prey to some prowling beast or bird, or gradually mingle with the decaying leaves which they so much resemble. It is said that when hatched by a hen they will directly disperse on some alarm, and so are lost, for they never hear the mother's call which gathers them again. These were my hens and chickens.

It is remarkable how many creatures live wild and free though secret in the woods, and still sustain themselves in the neighborhood of towns, suspected by hunters only. How retired the otter manages to live here! He grows to be four feet long, as big as a small boy, perhaps without any human being getting a glimpse of him. I formerly saw the raccoon in the woods behind where my house is built, and probably still heard their whinnying at night. Commonly I rested an hour or two in the shade at noon, after planting, and ate my lunch, and read a little by a spring which was the source of a swamp and of a brook, oozing from under Brister's Hill, half a mile from my field. The approach to this was through a succession of descending grassy hollows, full of young pitch-pines, into a larger wood about the swamp. There, in a very secluded and shaded spot, under a spreading white-pine, there was yet a clean firm sward to sit on. I had dug out the spring and made a well of clear gray water, where I could dip up a pailful without roiling it, and thither I went for this purpose almost every day in midsummer, when the pond was warmest. Thither too the woodcock led her brood, to probe the mud for worms, flying but a foot above them down the bank, while they ran in a troop beneath; but at last, spying me, she would leave her young and circle round and round me, nearer and nearer till within four or five feet, pretending broken wings and legs, to attract my attention, and get off her young, who would already have taken up their march, with faint wiry peep, single file through the swamp, as she directed. Or I heard the peep of the young when I could not see the parent bird. There too the turtle-doves sat over the spring, or fluttered from bough to bough of the soft white-pines over my head; or the red squirrel, coursing down the nearest bough, was particularly familiar and inquisitive. You only need sit still long enough in some attractive spot in the woods that all its inhabitants may exhibit themselves to you by turns.

I was witness to events of a less peaceful character. One day when I went out to my wood-pile, or rather my pile of stumps, I observed two large ants, the one red, the other much larger, nearly half an inch long, and black, fiercely

21. Commonly—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition. 38. There too—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition.

contending with one another. Having once got hold they never let go, but struggled and wrestled and rolled on the chips incessantly. Looking farther, I was surprised to find that the chips were covered with such combatants, that it was not a *duellum*, but a *bellum*, a war between two races of ants, the red  
 5 always pitted against the black, and frequently two red ones to one black. The legions of these Myrmidons covered all the hills and vales in my woodyard; and the ground was already strewn with the dead and dying, both red and black. It was the only battle-field I have ever witnessed, the only battle-field I ever trod while the battle was raging; internecine war; the red republicans  
 10 on the one hand, and the black imperialists on the other. On every side they were engaged in deadly combat, yet without any noise that I could hear, and human soldiers never fought so resolutely. I watched a couple that were fast locked in each other's embraces, in a little sunny valley amid the chips, now at noon-day prepared to fight till the sun went down, or life went out. The  
 15 smaller red champion had fastened himself like a vice to his adversary's front, and through all the tumblings on that field never for an instant ceased to gnaw at one of his feelers near the root, having already caused the other to go by the board; while the stronger black one dashed him from side to side, and as I saw on looking nearer, had already divested him of several of his  
 20 members. They fought with more pertinacity than bulldogs. Neither manifested the least disposition to retreat. It was evident that their battle-cry was Conquer or die. In the mean while there came along a single red ant on the hill-side of this valley, evidently full of excitement, who either had despatched his foe, or had not yet taken part in the battle; probably the latter, for he had  
 25 lost none of his limbs; whose mother had charged him to return with his shield or upon it. Or perchance he was some Achilles, who had nourished his wrath apart, and had now come to avenge or rescue his Patroclus. He saw this unequal combat from afar—for the blacks were nearly twice the size of the red, —he drew near with rapid pace till he stood on his guard within half an inch of  
 30 the combatants; then, watching his opportunity, he sprang upon the black warrior and commenced his operations near the root of his right fore-leg, leaving the foe to select among his own members; and so there were three united for life, as if a new kind of attraction had been invented which put all other locks and cements to shame. I should not have wondered by this time to find that  
 35 they had their respective musical bands stationed on some eminent chip, and playing their national airs the while, to excite the slow and cheer the dying combatants. I was myself excited somewhat even as if they had been men. The more you think of it, the less the difference. And certainly there is not the fight recorded in Concord history, at least, if in the history of America,  
 40 that will bear a moment's comparison with this, whether for the numbers engaged in it, or for the patriotism and heroism displayed. For numbers and

4. *duellum* . . . *bellum*—not a duel, but a war. 6. *Myrmidons*—The soldiers whom Achilles brought to the Trojan War were called Myrmidons. 22. *In the mean*—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition. 25-26. *mother* . . . *it*—The Spartan mother was supposed to have charged her son to return from battle either with his shield (that is, victorious) or upon it (that is, dead). 26. *Achilles*—In the Iliad Achilles sulks in his tent until his friend Patroclus is killed by the Trojans, when he sallies forth to battle and slays Hector. 38. *The more*—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition.

for carnage it was an Austerlitz or Dresden. Concord Fight! Two killed on the patriots' side, and Luther Blanchard wounded! Why here every ant was a Buttrick,—“Fire! for God's sake fire!”—and thousands shared the fate of Davis and Hosmer. There was not one hireling there. I have no doubt that it was a principle they fought for, as much as our ancestors, and not to avoid a three-penny tax on their tea; and the results of this battle will be as important and memorable to those whom it concerns as those of the battle of Bunker Hill at least. 5

I took up the chip on which the three I have particularly described were struggling, carried it into my house, and placed it under a tumbler on my window-sill, in order to see the issue. Holding a microscope to the first-mentioned red ant, I saw that, though he was assiduously gnawing at the near fore-leg of his enemy, having severed his remaining feeler, his own breast was all torn away, exposing what vitals he had there to the jaws of the black warrior, whose breast-plate was apparently too thick for him to pierce; and the dark carbuncles of the sufferer's eyes shone with ferocity such as war only could excite. They struggled half an hour longer under the tumbler, and when I looked again the black soldier had severed the heads of his foes from their bodies, and the still living heads were hanging on either side of him like ghastly trophies at his saddlebow, still apparently as firmly fastened as ever, and he was endeavoring with feeble struggles, being without feelers and with only the remnant of a leg, and I know not how many other wounds, to divest himself of them; which at length, after half an hour more, he accomplished. I raised the glass, and he went off over the window-sill in that crippled state. Whether he finally survived that combat, and spent the remainder of his days in some Hotel des Invalides, I do not know; but I thought that his industry would not be worth much thereafter. I never learned which party was victorious, nor the cause of the war; but I felt for the rest of that day as if I had my feelings excited and harrowed by witnessing the struggle, the ferocity and carnage, of a human battle before my door. 10 15 20 25 30

Kirby and Spence tell us that the battles of ants have long been celebrated and the date of them recorded, though they say that Huber is the only modern author who appears to have witnessed them. “Aeneas Sylvius,” say they, “after giving a very circumstantial account of one contested with great obstinacy by a great and small species on the trunk of a pear tree,” adds that “This action was fought in the pontificate of Eugenius the Fourth, in the presence of Nicholas Pistoriensis, an eminent lawyer, who related the whole history of the battle with the greatest fidelity.” A similar engagement between great and small ants is recorded by Olaus Magnus, in which the small ones, being victorious, are said to have buried the bodies of their own soldiers, but left those of their giant enemies a prey to the birds. This event happened previous to 35 40

1. **Austerlitz**—At the Battle of Austerlitz (1805) Napoleon slaughtered the allies opposed to him; the Battle of **Dresden** (1813) was marked by great slaughter on both sides. Thoreau's references to the skirmish at **Concord** are self-explanatory, as are his references to the tax on tea and the Battle of Bunker's Hill in the following lines. 26. **Hotel des Invalides**—The French “Old Soldiers' Home” in Paris is the Hôtel des Invalides. 33 ff. “**Aeneas . . . Sweden**”—The references and quotation are from *An Introduction to Entomology or Elements of the Natural History of Insects* by William Kirby and William Spence, and may be found in the 2d ed., London, 1818, 4 vols., Vol. II, p. 71.

the expulsion of the tyrant Christiern the Second from Sweden." The battle which I witnessed took place in the Presidency of Polk, five years before the passage of Webster's Fugitive-Slave Bill.

Many a village Bose, fit only to course a mud-turtle in a victualling cellar, sported his heavy quarters in the woods, without the knowledge of his master, and ineffectually smelled at old fox burrows and woodchucks' holes; led perchance by some slight cur which nimbly threaded the wood, and might still inspire a natural terror in its denizens;—now far behind his guide, barking like a canine bull toward some small squirrel which had treed itself for scrutiny, then, cantering off, bending the bushes with his weight, imagining that he is on the track of some stray member of the jerbilla family. Once I was surprised to see a cat walking along the stony shore of the pond, for they rarely wander so far from home. The surprise was mutual. Nevertheless the most domestic cat, which has lain on a rug all her days, appears quite at home in the woods, and, by her sly and stealthy behavior, proves herself more native there than the regular inhabitants. Once, when berrying, I met with a cat with young kittens in the woods, quite wild, and they all, like their mother, had their backs up and were fiercely spitting at me. A few years before I lived in the woods there was what was called a "winged cat" in one of the farm-houses in Lincoln nearest the pond, Mr. Gilian Baker's. When I called to see her in June, 1842, she was gone a-hunting in the woods, as was her wont (I am not sure whether it was a male or female, and so use the more common pronoun,) but her mistress told me that she came into the neighborhood a little more than a year before, in April, and was finally taken into their house; that she was of a dark brownish-gray color, with a white spot on her throat, and white feet, and had a large bushy tail like a fox; that in winter the fur grew thick and flatted out along her sides, forming strips ten or twelve inches long by two and a half wide, and under her chin like a muff, the upper side loose, the under matted like felt, and in the spring these appendages dropped off. They gave me a pair of her "wings," which I keep still. There is no appearance of a membrane about them. Some thought it was part flying-squirrel or some other wild animal, which is not impossible, for, according to naturalists, prolific hybrids have been produced by the union of the marten and domestic cat. This would have been the right kind of cat for me to keep, if I had kept any; for why should not a poet's cat be winged as well as his horse?

In the fall the loon (*Colymbus glacialis*) came, as usual, to moult and bathe in the pond, making the woods ring with his wild laughter before I had risen. At rumor of his arrival all the Mill-dam sportsmen are on the alert, in gigs and on foot, two by two and three by three, with patent rifles and conical balls and spy-glasses. They come rustling through the woods like autumn leaves, at least ten men to one loon. Some station themselves on this side of

2. **Presidency of Polk**—James K. Polk, eleventh President of the United States, 1845-49.  
 3. **Fugitive-Slave Bill**—By supporting the Compromise of 1850, Webster was also compelled to support the bill for the return of fugitive slaves which was part of that program. 11. **jerbilla**—Thoreau probably refers to some member of the *Gerbillinae* family of animals, as the pouched mouse. 11. **Once I was**—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition. 16. **Once, when**—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition. In the previous passage the Bibliophile text also indicates that Thoreau met the cat in the summer time. 35. **horse**—Pegasus.

the pond, some on that, for the poor bird cannot be omnipresent; if he dive here he must come up there. But now the kind October wind rises, rustling the leaves and rippling the surface of the water, so that no loon can be heard or seen, though his foes sweep the pond with spy-glasses, and make the woods resound with their discharges. The waves generously rise and dash angrily, 5 taking sides with all waterfowl, and our sportsmen must beat a retreat to town and shop and unfinished jobs. But they were too often successful. When I went to get a pail of water early in the morning I frequently saw this stately bird sailing out of my cove within a few rods. If I endeavored to overtake him in a boat, in order to see how he would manoeuvre, he would dive and be completely lost, so that I did not discover him again, sometimes, till the latter part of the day. But I was more than a match for him on the surface. He commonly went off in a rain. 10

As I was paddling along the north shore one very calm October afternoon, for such days especially they settle on to the lakes, like the milkweed down, 15 having looked in vain over the pond for a loon, suddenly one, sailing out from the shore toward the middle a few rods in front of me, set up his wild laugh and betrayed himself. I pursued with a paddle and he dived, but when he came up I was nearer than before. He dived again, but I miscalculated the direction he would take, and we were fifty rods apart when he came to the surface this time, for I had helped to widen the interval; and again he laughed 20 loud and long, and with more reason than before. He manoeuvred so cunningly that I could not get within half a dozen rods of him. Each time, when he came to the surface, turning his head this way and that, he coolly surveyed the water and the land, and apparently chose his course so that he might come up where there was the widest expanse of water and at the greatest distance 25 from the boat. It was surprising how quickly he made up his mind and put his resolve into execution. He led me at once to the widest part of the pond, and could not be driven from it. While he was thinking one thing in his brain, I was endeavoring to divine his thought in mine. It was a pretty game, played 30 on the smooth surface of the pond, a man against a loon. Suddenly your adversary's checker disappears beneath the board, and the problem is to place yours nearest to where his will appear again. Sometimes he would come up unexpectedly on the opposite side of me, having apparently passed directly under the boat. So long-winded was he and so unweariable, that when he 35 had swum farthest he would immediately plunge again, nevertheless; and then no wit could divine where in the deep pond, beneath the smooth surface, he might be speeding his way like a fish, for he had time and ability to visit the bottom of the pond in its deepest part. It is said that loons have been caught in the New York lakes eighty feet beneath the surface, with hooks set for 40 trout,—though Walden is deeper than that. How surprised must the fishes be to see this ungainly visitor from another sphere speeding his way amid their schools! Yet he appeared to know his course as surely underwater as on the surface, and swam much faster there. Once or twice I saw a ripple where

2. But—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition. 39. It is said—The Bibliophile edition indicates that Thoreau had read of catching trout at this depth in Seneca Lake. 41. How surprised—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition.



he approached the surface, just put his head out to reconnoitre, and instantly dived again. I found that it was as well for me to rest on my oars and wait his reappearing as to endeavor to calculate where he would rise; for again and again, when I was straining my eyes over the surface one way, I would suddenly be startled by his unearthly laugh behind me. But why, after displaying so much cunning, did he invariably betray himself the moment he came up by that loud laugh? Did not his white breast enough betray him? He was indeed a silly loon, I thought. I could commonly hear the splash of the water when he came up, and so also detected him. But after an hour he seemed as fresh as ever, dived as willingly and swam yet farther than at first. It was surprising to see how serenely he sailed off with unruffled breast when he came to the surface, doing all the work with his webbed feet beneath. His usual note was this demoniac laughter, yet somewhat like that of a water-fowl; but occasionally, when he had balked me most successfully and come up a long way off, he uttered a long-drawn unearthly howl, probably more like that of a wolf than any bird; as when a beast puts his muzzle to the ground and deliberately howls. This was his looning,—perhaps the wildest sound that is ever heard here, making the woods ring far and wide. I concluded that he laughed in derision of my efforts, confident of his own resources. Though the sky was by this time overcast, the pond was so smooth that I could see where he broke the surface when I did not hear him. His white breast, the stillness of the air, and the smoothness of the water were all against him. At length, having come up fifty rods off, he uttered one of those prolonged howls, as if calling on the god of loons to aid him, and immediately there came a wind from the east and rippled the surface, and filled the whole air with misty rain, and I was impressed as if it were the prayer of the loon answered, and his god was angry with me; and so I left him disappearing far away on the tumultuous surface.

For hours, in fall days, I watched the ducks cunningly tack and veer and hold the middle of the pond, far from the sportsmen; tricks which they will have less need to practise in Louisiana bayous. When compelled to rise they would sometimes circle round and round and over the pond at a considerable height, from which they could easily see to other ponds and the river, like black motes in the sky; and, when I thought they had gone off thither long since, they would settle down by a slanting flight of a quarter of a mile on to a distant part which was left free; but what beside safety they got by sailing in the middle of Walden I do not know, unless they love its water for the same reason that I do.

## LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE

"Life without Principle," largely compounded out of passages in Thoreau's Journal, 1850-55, was first printed in the *Atlantic Monthly*, October, 1863; thence transferred to *A Yankee in Canada* (1866); and came to rest in the *Miscellanies* volume of 1893 (Vol. X of the Riverside edition).

9. But after—New paragraph in the Bibliophile edition.

AT a lyceum, not long since, I felt that the lecturer had chosen a theme too foreign to himself, and so failed to interest me as much as he might have done. He described things not in or near to his heart, but toward his extremities and superficialities. There was, in this sense, no truly central or centralizing thought in the lecture. I would have had him deal with his privatest experience, as the poet does. The greatest compliment that was ever paid me was when one asked me what *I thought*, and attended to my answer. I am surprised, as well as delighted, when this happens, it is such a rare use he would make of me, as if he were acquainted with the tool. Commonly, if men want anything of me, it is only to know how many acres I make of their land,—since I am a surveyor,—or, at most, what trivial news I have burdened myself with. They never will go to law for my meat; they prefer the shell. A man once came a considerable distance to ask me to lecture on Slavery; but on conversing with him, I found that he and his clique expected seven eighths of the lecture to be theirs, and only one eighth mine; so I declined. I take it for granted, when I am invited to lecture anywhere,—for I have had a little experience in that business,—that there is a desire to hear what *I think* on some subject, though I may be the greatest fool in the country,—and not that I should say pleasant things merely, or such as the audience will assent to; and I resolve, accordingly, that I will give them a strong dose of myself. They have sent for me, and engaged to pay for me, and I am determined that they shall have me, though I bore them beyond all precedent.

So now I would say something similar to you, my readers. Since *you* are my readers, and I have not been much of a traveler, I will not talk about people a thousand miles off but come as near home as I can. As the time is short, I will leave out all the flattery, and retain all the criticism.

Let us consider the way in which we spend our lives.

This world is a place of business. What an infinite bustle! I am awaked almost every night by the panting of the locomotive. It interrupts my dreams. There is no sabbath. It would be glorious to see mankind at leisure for once. It is nothing but work, work, work. I cannot easily buy a blank-book to write thoughts in; they are commonly ruled for dollars and cents. An Irishman, seeing me making a minute in the fields, took it for granted that I was calculating my wages. If a man was tossed out of a window when an infant, and so made a cripple for life, or scared out of his wits by the Indians, it is regretted chiefly because he was thus incapacitated for—business! I think that there is nothing, not even crime, more opposed to poetry, to philosophy, ay, to life itself, than this incessant business.

There is a coarse and boisterous money-making fellow in the outskirts of our town, who is going to build a bank-wall under the hill along the edge of his meadow. The powers have put this into his head to keep him out of mischief, and he wishes me to spend three weeks digging there with him. The result will be that he will perhaps get some more money to hoard, and leave for his heirs to spend foolishly. If I do this, most will commend me as an industrious and hard-working man; but if I choose to devote myself to certain labors which yield more real profit, though but little money, they may be inclined to look on me as an idler. Nevertheless, as I do not need the police of meaningless

labor to regulate me, and do not see anything absolutely praiseworthy in this fellow's undertaking any more than in many an enterprise of our own or foreign governments, however amusing it may be to him or them, I prefer to finish my education at a different school.

- 5 If a man walk in the woods for love of them half of each day, he is in danger of being regarded as a loafer; but if he spends his whole day as a speculator, shearing off those woods and making earth bald before her time, he is esteemed an industrious and enterprising citizen. As if a town had no interest in its forests but to cut them down!
- 10 Most men would feel insulted if it were proposed to employ them in throwing stones over a wall, and then in throwing them back, merely that they might earn their wages. But many are no more worthily employed now. For instance: just after sunrise, one summer morning, I noticed one of my neighbors walking beside his team, which was slowly drawing a heavy hewn stone
- 15 swung under the axle, surrounded by an atmosphere of industry,—his day's work begun,—his brow commenced to sweat,—a reproach to all sluggards and idlers,—pausing abreast the shoulders of his oxen, and half turning round with a flourish of his merciful whip, while they gained their length on him. And I thought, Such is the labor which the American Congress exists to protect,—honest, manly toil,—honest as the day is long,—that makes his bread
- 20 taste sweet, and keeps society sweet,—which all men respect and have consecrated; one of the sacred band, doing the needful but irksome drudgery. Indeed, I felt a slight reproach, because I observed this from a window, and was not abroad and stirring about a similar business. The day went by, and at
- 25 evening I passed the yard of another neighbor, who keeps many servants, and spends much money foolishly, while he adds nothing to the common stock, and there I saw the stone of the morning lying beside a whimsical structure intended to adorn this Lord Timothy Dexter's premises, and the dignity forthwith departed from the teamster's labor, in my eyes. In my opinion, the sun
- 30 was made to light worthier toil than this. I may add that his employer has since run off, in debt to a good part of the town, and, after passing through Chancery, has settled somewhere else, there to become once more a patron of the arts.

The ways by which you may get money almost without exception lead downward. To have done anything by which you earned money *merely* is to have

35 been truly idle or worse. If the laborer gets no more than the wages which his employer pays him, he is cheated, he cheats himself. If you would get money as a writer or lecturer, you must be popular, which is to go down perpendicularly. Those services which the community will most readily pay for, it is most disagreeable to render. You are paid for being something less than a man. The

40 state does not commonly reward a genius any more wisely. Even the poet laureate would rather not have to celebrate the accidents of royalty. He must be bribed with a pipe of wine; and perhaps another poet is called away from his muse to gauge that very pipe. As for my own business, even that kind of

28. Lord . . . Dexter's—the eccentric merchant known as Lord Timothy Dexter of Newburyport (1747-1806), whose house on High Street in that city (1796) Thoreau refers to. 31. Chancery—equity court. 42. pipe of wine—One of the legal perquisites of the Poet Laureate in England is a pipe (cask) of wine.

surveying which I could do with most satisfaction my employers do not want. They would prefer that I should do my work coarsely and not too well, ay, not well enough. When I observe that there are different ways of surveying, my employer commonly asks which will give him the most land, not which is most correct. I once invented a rule for measuring cord-wood, and tried to introduce it in Boston; but the measurer there told me that the sellers did not wish to have their wood measured correctly,—that he was already too accurate for them, and therefore they commonly got their wood measured in Charlestown before crossing the bridge.

The aim of the laborer should be, not to get his living, to get “a good job,” but to perform well a certain work; and, even in a pecuniary sense, it would be economy for a town to pay its laborers so well that they would not feel that they were working for low ends, as for a livelihood merely, but for scientific, or even moral ends. Do not hire a man who does your work for money, but him who does it for love of it.

It is remarkable that there are few men so well employed, so much to their minds, but that a little money or fame would commonly buy them off from their present pursuit. I see advertisements for *active* young men, as if activity were the whole of a young man’s capital. Yet I have been surprised when one has with confidence proposed to me, a grown man, to embark in some enterprise of his, as if I had absolutely nothing to do, my life having been a complete failure hitherto. What a doubtful compliment this to pay me! As if he had met me half-way across the ocean beating up against the wind, but bound nowhere, and proposed to me to go along with him! If I did, what do you think the underwriters would say? No, no! I am not without employment at this stage of the voyage. To tell the truth, I saw an advertisement for able-bodied seamen, when I was a boy, sauntering in my native port, and as soon as I came of age I embarked.

The community has no bribe that will tempt a wise man. You may raise money enough to tunnel a mountain, but you cannot raise money enough to hire a man who is minding *his own* business. An efficient and valuable man does what he can, whether the community pay him for it or not. The inefficient offer their inefficiency to the highest bidder, and are forever expecting to be put into office. One would suppose that they were rarely disappointed.

Perhaps I am more than usually jealous with respect to my freedom. I feel that my connection with and obligation to society are still very slight and transient. Those slight labors which afford me a livelihood, and by which it is allowed that I am to some extent serviceable to my contemporaries, are as yet commonly a pleasure to me, and I am not often reminded that they are a necessity. So far I am successful. But I foresee that if my wants should be much increased, the labor required to supply them would become a drudgery. If I should sell both my forenoons and afternoons to society, as most appear to do, I am sure that for me there would be nothing left worth living for. I trust that I shall never thus sell my birthright for a mess of pottage. I wish to suggest that a man may be very industrious, and yet not spend his time well. There

8. Charlestown—formerly an independent city across the Charles River from Boston. 44. mess of pottage—Cf. Gen. 25: 29-34.

is no more fatal blunderer than he who consumes the greater part of his life getting his living. All great enterprises are self-supporting. The poet, for instance, must sustain his body by his poetry, as a steam planing-mill feeds its boilers with the shavings it makes. You must get your living by loving. But  
 5 as it is said of the merchants that ninety-seven in a hundred fail, so the life of men generally, tried by this standard, is a failure, and bankruptcy may be surely prophesied.

Merely to come into the world the heir of a fortune is not to be born, but to be still-born, rather. To be supported by the charity of friends, or a govern-  
 10 ment-pension,—provided you continue to breathe,—by whatever fine synonyms you describe these relations, is to go into the almshouse. On Sundays the poor debtor goes to church to take an account of stock, and finds, of course, that his outgoes have been greater than his income. In the Catholic Church, espe-  
 15 cially, they go into chancery, make a clean confession, give up all, and think to start again. Thus men will lie on their backs, talking about the fall of man, and never make an effort to get up.

As for the comparative demand which men make on life, it is an important difference between two, that the one is satisfied with a level success, that his marks can all be hit by point-blank shots, but the other, however low and un-  
 20 successful his life may be, constantly elevates his aim, though at a very slight angle to the horizon. I should much rather be the last man,—though, as the Orientals say, “Greatness doth not approach him who is forever looking down; and all those who are looking high are growing poor.”

It is remarkable that there is little or nothing to be remembered written on  
 25 the subject of getting a living; how to make getting a living not merely honest and honorable, but altogether inviting and glorious; for if *getting* a living is not so, then living is not. One would think, from looking at literature, that this question had never disturbed a solitary individual’s musings. Is it that men are too much disgusted with their experience to speak of it? The lesson  
 30 of value which money teaches, which the Author of the Universe has taken so much pains to teach us, we are inclined to skip altogether. As for the means of living, it is wonderful how indifferent men of all classes are about it, even reformers, so called,—whether they inherit, or earn, or steal it. I think that Society has done nothing for us in this respect, or at least has undone what  
 35 she has done. Cold and hunger seem more friendly to my nature than those methods which men have adopted and advise to ward them off.

The title *wise* is, for the most part, falsely applied. How can one be a wise man, if he does not know any better how to live than other men?—if he is only more cunning and intellectually subtle? Does Wisdom work in a tread-  
 40 mill? or does she teach how to succeed *by her example*? Is there any such thing as wisdom not applied to life? Is she merely the miller who grinds the finest logic? It is pertinent to ask if Plato got his *living* in a better way or more successfully than his contemporaries,—or did he succumb to the difficul-  
 45 ties of life like other men? Did he seem to prevail over some of them merely by indifference, or by assuming grand airs? or find it easier to live, because his aunt remembered him in her will? The ways in which most men get their living, that is, live, are mere makeshifts, and a shirking of the real business

of life,—chiefly because they do not know, but partly because they do not mean, any better.

The rush to California, for instance, and the attitude, not merely of merchants, but of philosophers and prophets, so called, in relation to it, reflect the greatest disgrace on mankind. That so many are ready to live by luck, and so get the means of commanding the labor of others less lucky, without contributing any value to society! And that is called enterprise! I know of no more startling development of the immorality of trade, and all the common modes of getting a living. The philosophy and poetry and religion of such a mankind are not worth the dust of a puff-ball. The hog that gets his living by rooting, stirring up the soil so, would be ashamed of such company. If I could command the wealth of all the worlds by lifting my finger, I would not pay *such* a price for it. Even Mahomet knew that God did not make this world in jest. It makes God to be a moneyed gentleman who scatters a handful of pennies in order to see mankind scramble for them. The world's raffle! A subsistence in the domains of Nature a thing to be raffled for! What a comment, what a satire, on our institutions! The conclusion will be, that mankind will hang itself upon a tree. And have all the precepts in all the Bibles taught men only this? and is the last and most admirable invention of the human race only an improved muck-rake? Is this the ground on which Orientals and Occidentals meet? Did God direct us so to get our living, digging where we never planted,—and He would, perchance, reward us with lumps of gold?

God gave the righteous man a certificate entitling him to food and raiment, but the unrighteous man found a facsimile of the same in God's coffers, and appropriated it, and obtained food and raiment like the former. It is one of the most extensive systems of counterfeiting that the world has seen. I did not know that mankind was suffering for want of gold. I have seen a little of it. I know that it is very malleable, but not so malleable as wit. A grain of gold will gild a great surface, but not so much as a grain of wisdom.

The gold-digger in the ravines of the mountains is as much a gambler as his fellow in the saloons of San Francisco. What difference does it make whether you shake dirt or shake dice? If you win, society is the loser. The gold-digger is the enemy of the honest laborer, whatever checks and compensations there may be. It is not enough to tell me that you worked hard to get your gold. So does the Devil work hard. The way of transgressors may be hard in many respects. The humblest observer who goes to the mines sees and says that gold-digging is of the character of a lottery; the gold thus obtained is not the same thing with the wages of honest toil. But, practically, he forgets what he has seen, for he has seen only the fact, not the principle, and goes into trade there, that is, buys a ticket in what commonly proves another lottery, where the fact is not so obvious.

After reading Howitt's account of the Australian gold-diggings one evening,

3. **California**—The gold rush of 1849 was followed by a steady stream of immigration. 17-18. **hang . . . tree**.—*Cf.* the suicide of Judas, Matt. 27: 5. 20. **muck-rake**—Thoreau has in mind the celebrated passage in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*: the man with the muck-rake in the Interpreter's House. 35. **transgressors**—*Cf.* Prov. 13: 15. 42. **Howitt's**—the reference is to *Impressions of Australic Felix* (1845) by Richard Howitt.

I had in my mind's eye, all night, the numerous valleys, with their streams, all cut up with foul pits, from ten to one hundred feet deep, and half a dozen feet across, as close as they can be dug, and partly filled with water,—the locality to which men furiously rush to probe for their fortunes,—uncertain  
 5 where they shall break ground,—not knowing but the gold is under their camp itself,—sometimes digging one hundred and sixty feet before they strike the vein, or then missing it by a foot,—turned into demons, and regardless of each others' rights, in their thirst for riches,—whole valleys, for thirty miles, suddenly honeycombed by the pits of the miners, so that even hundreds are  
 10 drowned in them,—standing in water, and covered with mud and clay, they work night and day, dying of exposure and disease. Having read this, and partly forgotten it, I was thinking, accidentally, of my own unsatisfactory life, doing as others do; and with that vision of the diggings still before me, I asked myself why *I* might not be washing some gold daily, though it were only the  
 15 finest particles,—why *I* might not sink a shaft down to the gold within me, and work that mine. *There* is a Ballarat, a Bendigo for you,—what though it were a sulky-gully? At any rate, I might pursue some path, however solitary and narrow and crooked, in which I could walk with love and reverence. Wherever a man separates from the multitude, and goes his own way in this  
 20 mood, there indeed is a fork in the road, though ordinary travellers may see only a gap in the paling. His solitary path across-lots will turn out the *higher way* of the two.

Men rush to California and Australia as if the true gold were to be found in that direction; but that is to go to the very opposite extreme to where it  
 25 lies. They go prospecting farther and farther away from the true lead, and are most unfortunate when they think themselves most successful. Is not our *native* soil auriferous? Does not a stream from the golden mountains flow through our native valley? and has not this for more than geologic ages been bringing down the shining particles and forming the nuggets for us? Yet,  
 30 strange to tell, if a digger steal away, prospecting for this true gold, into the unexplored solitudes around us, there is no danger that any will dog his steps, and endeavor to supplant him. He may claim and undermine the whole valley even, both the cultivated and the uncultivated portions, his whole life long in peace, for no one will ever dispute his claim. They will not mind his cradles  
 35 or his toms. He is not confined to a claim twelve feet square, as at Ballarat, but may mine anywhere, and wash the whole wide world in his tom.

Howitt says of the man who found the great nugget which weighed twenty-eight pounds, at the Bendigo diggings in Australia: "He soon began to drink; got a horse, and rode all about, generally at full gallop, and, when he met  
 40 people, called out to inquire if they knew who he was, and then kindly informed them that he was 'the bloody wretch that had found the nugget.' At last he rode full speed against a tree, and nearly knocked his brains out." I

16. **Ballarat**—the city of Victoria, Australia, where gold was discovered in 1851. 16. **Bendigo**—also known as Sandhurst, a city near Ballarat, celebrated for the gold-mining in its vicinity. 17. **sulky-gully**—a gully just wide enough to drive a sulky through. 25. **lead**—in gold-mining, an alluvial deposit of gold in an ancient river bed. 27. **auriferous**—gold-bearing. 34-35. **cradles . . . toms**—long troughs formerly used in gold-washing.

think, however, there was no danger of that, for he had already knocked his brains out against the nugget. Howitt adds, "He is a hopelessly ruined man." But he is a type of the class. They are all fast men. Hear some of the names of the places where they dig: "Jackass Flat,"—"Sheep's-Head Gully,"—"Murderer's Bar," etc. Is there no satire in these names? Let them carry their ill-  
 gotten wealth where they will, I am thinking it will still be "Jackass Flat," if  
 not "Murderer's Bar," where they live. 5

The last resource of our energy has been the robbing of graveyards on the Isthmus of Darien, an enterprise which appears to be but in its infancy; for, according to late accounts, an act has passed its second reading in the legisla-  
 ture of New Granada, regulating this kind of mining; and a correspondent  
 of the "Tribune" writes: "In the dry season, when the weather will permit  
 of the country being properly prospected, no doubt other rich *guacas* [that  
 is, graveyards] will be found." To emigrants he says: "Do not come before  
 December; take the Isthmus route in preference to the Boca del Toro one;  
 bring no useless baggage, and do not cumber yourself with a tent; but a good  
 pair of blankets will be necessary; a pick, shovel, and axe of good material will  
 be almost all that is required:" advice which might have been taken from the  
 "Burker's Guide." And he concludes with this line in italics and small capi-  
 tals: "*If you are doing well at home, STAY THERE,*" which may fairly be in-  
 terpreted to mean, "If you are getting a good living by robbing graveyards  
 at home, stay there." 10 15 20

But why go to California for a text? She is the child of New England, bred at her own school and church.

It is remarkable that among all the preachers there are so few moral teach-  
 ers. The prophets are employed in excusing the ways of men. Most reverend  
 seniors, the *illuminati* of the age, tell me, with a gracious, reminiscent smile,  
 betwixt an aspiration and a shudder, not to be too tender about these things,—  
 to lump all that, that is, make a lump of gold of it. The highest advice I have  
 heard on these subjects was groveling. The burden of it was,—It is not worth  
 your while to undertake to reform the world in this particular. Do not ask  
 how your bread is buttered; it will make you sick, if you do,—and the like. A  
 man had better starve at once than lose his innocence in the process of getting  
 his bread. If within the sophisticated man there is not an unsophisticated one,  
 then he is but one of the devil's angels. As we grow old, we live more coarsely,  
 we relax a little in our disciplines, and, to some extent, cease to obey our finest  
 instincts. But we should be fastidious to the extreme of sanity, disregarding the  
 gibes of those who are more unfortunate than ourselves. 25 30 35

In our science and philosophy, even, there is commonly no true and absolute  
 account of things. The spirit of sect and bigotry has planted its hoof amid the  
 stars. You have only to discuss the problem, whether the stars are inhabited or  
 not, in order to discover it. Why must we daub the heavens as well as the 40

9. **Isthmus of Darien**—Isthmus of Panama, which, before the digging of the Panama Canal, was, because of its fevers, a fearful obstacle to those who wished to get to California from the Atlantic Coast. 11. **New Granada**—now known as the republic of Colombia. 15. **Boca del Toro**—Bocas del Toro, an indentation north of the Mosquito Gulf and west of the present Panama Canal. 19. "**Burker's Guide**"—not a book, but a humorous invention of Thoreau's. A burker is one who murdered by suffocation in order to obtain and sell bodies for dissection.



earth? It was an unfortunate discovery that Dr. Kane was a Mason, and that Sir John Franklin was another. But it was a more cruel suggestion that possibly that was the reason why the former went in search of the latter. There is not a popular magazine in this country that would dare to print a child's  
 5 thought on important subjects without comment. It must be submitted to the D.D.'s. I would it were the chickadee-dees.

You come from attending the funeral of mankind to attend to a natural phenomenon. A little thought is sexton to all the world.

I hardly know an *intellectual* man, even, who is so broad and truly liberal  
 10 that you can think aloud in his society. Most with whom you endeavor to talk soon come to a stand against some institution in which they appear to hold stock,—that is, some particular, not universal, way of viewing things. They will continually thrust their own low roof, with its narrow skylight, between you and the sky, when it is the unobstructed heavens you would view. Get out  
 15 of the way with your cobwebs; wash your windows, I say! In some lyceums they tell me that they have voted to exclude the subject of religion. But how do I know what their religion is, and when I am near to or far from it? I have walked into such an arena and done my best to make a clean breast of what religion I have experienced, and the audience never suspected what I was about.  
 20 The lecture was as harmless as moonshine to them. Whereas, if I had read to them the biography of the greatest scamps in history, they might have thought that I had written the lives of the deacons of their church. Ordinarily, the inquiry is, Where did you come from? or, Where are you going? That was a more pertinent question which I overheard one of my auditors put to another  
 25 once,—“What does he lecture for?” It made me quake in my shoes.

To speak impartially, the best men that I know are not serene, a world in themselves. For the most part, they dwell in forms, and flatter and study effect only more finely than the rest. We select granite for the underpinning of our houses and barns; we build fences of stone; but we do not ourselves rest on  
 30 an underpinning of granitic truth, the lowest primitive rock. Our sills are rotten. What stuff is the man made of who is not coexistent in our thought with the purest and subtlest truth? I often accuse my finest acquaintances of an immense frivolity; for, while there are manners and compliments we do not meet, we do not teach one another the lessons of honesty and sincerity that the brutes  
 35 do, or of steadiness and solidity that the rocks do. The fault is commonly mutual, however; for we do not habitually demand any more of each other.

That excitement about Kossuth, consider how characteristic, but superficial, it was!—only another kind of politics or dancing. Men were making speeches to him all over the country, but each expressed only the thought, or the want  
 40 of thought, of the multitude. No man stood on truth. They were merely banded together, as usual one leaning on another, and all together on nothing; as the

1. Kane—Elisha Kent Kane (1820-1857), American Arctic explorer, whose career began with two attempts to find Sir John Franklin. 2. Franklin—Sir John Franklin (1786-1847), English explorer, mysteriously lost in the Arctic Circle. 30. sills—pun on the meaning of sill as (1) the lowest supporting timber of a house; and (2) a sheet of igneous rock intruded between beds or strata of older rock. 37. Kossuth—Louis Kossuth (1802-1894), Hungarian patriot, whose visit to the United States in 1851 produced a great outburst of emotional fervor, which, however, evaporated.

Hindoos made the world rest on an elephant, the elephant on a tortoise, and the tortoise on a serpent, and had nothing to put under the serpent. For all fruit of that stir we have the Kossuth hat.

Just so hollow and ineffectual, for the most part, is our ordinary conversation. Surface meets surface. When our life ceases to be inward and private, conversation degenerates into mere gossip. We rarely meet a man who can tell us any news which he has not read in a newspaper, or been told by his neighbor; and, for the most part, the only difference between us and our fellow is that he has seen the newspaper, or been out to tea, and we have not. In proportion as our inward life fails, we go more constantly and desperately to the post-office. You may depend on it, that the poor fellow who walks away with the greatest number of letters, proud of his extensive correspondence, has not heard from himself this long while.

I do not know but it is too much to read one newspaper a week. I have tried it recently, and for so long it seems to me that I have not dwelt in my native region. The sun, the clouds, the snow, the trees say not so much to me. You cannot serve two masters. It requires more than a day's devotion to know and to possess the wealth of a day.

We may well be ashamed to tell what things we have read or heard in our day. I do not know why my news should be so trivial,—considering what one's dreams and expectations are, why the developments should be so paltry. The news we hear, for the most part, is not news to our genius. It is the stalest repetition. You are often tempted to ask why such stress is laid on a particular experience which you have had,—that, after twenty-five years, you should meet Hobbins, Registrar of Deeds, again on the sidewalk. Have you not budged an inch, then? Such is the daily news. Its facts appear to float in the atmosphere, insignificant as the sporules of fungi, and impinge on some neglected *thallus*, or surface of our minds, which affords a basis for them, and hence a parasitic growth. We should wash ourselves clean of such news. Of what consequence, though our planet explode, if there is no character involved in the explosion? In health we have not the least curiosity about such events. We do not live for idle amusement. I would not run round a corner to see the world blow up.

All summer, and far into the autumn, perchance, you unconsciously went by the newspapers and the news, and now you find it was because the morning and the evening were full of news to you. Your walks were full of incidents. You attended, not to the affairs of Europe, but to your own affairs in Massachusetts fields. If you chance to live and move and have your being in that thin stratum in which the events that make the news transpire,—thinner than the paper on which it is printed,—then these things will fill the world for you; but if you soar above or dive below that plane, you cannot remember nor be reminded of them. Really to see the sun rise or go down every day, so to relate ourselves to a universal fact, would preserve us sane forever. Nations! What are nations? Tartars, and Huns, and Chinamen! Like insects, they swarm. The historian strives in vain to make them memorable. It is for want of a man that there

17. two masters—*Cf.* Matt. 6: 24. 27. sporules—little spores. 27. thallus—a vegetable structure without vascular tissue.

are so many men. It is individuals that populate the world. Any man thinking may say with the Spirit of Lodin,—

“I looked down from my height on nations,  
And they become ashes before me;—  
5           Calm is my dwelling in the clouds;  
          Pleasant are the great fields of my rest.”

Pray, let us live without being drawn by dogs, Esquimaux-fashion, tearing over hill and dale, and biting each other's ears.

Not without a slight shudder at the danger, I often perceive how near I had  
10 come to admitting into my mind the details of some trivial affair,—the news of the street; and I am astonished to observe how willing men are to lumber their minds with such rubbish,—to permit idle rumors and incidents of the most insignificant kind to intrude on ground which should be sacred to thought. Shall the mind be a public arena, where the affairs of the street and the gossip  
15 of the tea-table chiefly are discussed? Or shall it be a quarter of heaven itself,—an hypaethral temple, consecrated to the service of the gods? I find it so difficult to dispose of the few facts which to me are significant, that I hesitate to burden my attention with those which are insignificant, which only a divine mind could illustrate. Such is, for the most part, the news in newspapers and  
20 conversation. It is important to preserve the mind's chastity in this respect. Think of admitting the details of a single case of the criminal court into our thoughts, to stalk profanely through their very *sanctum sanctorum* for an hour, ay, for many hours! to make a very barroom of the mind's inmost apartment, as if for so long the dust of the street had occupied us,—the very street  
25 itself, with all its travel, its bustle, and filth, had passed through our thoughts' shrine! Would it not be an intellectual and moral suicide? When I have been compelled to sit spectator and auditor in a court-room for some hours, and have seen my neighbors, who were not compelled, stealing in from time to time, and tiptoeing about with washed hands and faces, it has appeared to my  
30 mind's eye, that, when they took off their hats, their ears suddenly expanded into vast hoppers for sound, between which even their narrow heads were crowded. Like the vanes of windmills, they caught the broad but shallow stream of sound, which, after a few titillating gyrations in their coggy brains, passed out the other side. I wondered if, when they got home, they were as  
35 careful to wash their ears as before their hands and faces. It has seemed to me, at such a time, that the auditors and the witnesses, the jury and the counsel, the judge and the criminal at the bar,—if I may presume him guilty before he is convicted,—were all equally criminal, and a thunderbolt might be expected to descend and consume them all together.

40 By all kinds of traps and signboards, threatening the extreme penalty of the divine law, exclude such trespassers from the only ground which can be sacred to you. It is so hard to forget what it is worse than useless to remember!

2. *Spirit of Lodin*—from a speech by the Spirit of Loda in the debate with Fingal in James Macpherson's Ossianic poem *Carriethura* (1761). 16. *hypæthral*—open to the sky. 22. *sanctum sanctorum*—holy of holies. The phrase is from the Vulgate Bible. 33. *coggy*—seemingly the only appearance of the word in this sense. Apparently a pun on coggy, meaning (1) cogged; and (2) deceptive.

If I am to be a thoroughfare, I prefer that it be of the mountain-brooks, the Parnassian streams, and not the town sewers. There is inspiration, that gossip which comes to the ear of the attentive mind from the courts of heaven. There is the profane and stale revelation of the barroom and the police court. The same ear is fitted to receive both communications. Only the character of the hearer determines to which it shall be open, and to which closed. I believe that the mind can be permanently profaned by the habit of attending to trivial things, so that all our thoughts shall be tinged with triviality. Our very intellect shall be macadamized, as it were,—its foundation broken into fragments for the wheels of travel to roll over; and if you would know what will make the most durable pavement, surpassing rolled stones, spruce blocks, and asphaltum, you have only to look into some of our minds which have been subjected to this treatment so long.

If we have thus desecrated ourselves,—as who has not?—the remedy will be by wariness and devotion to reconsecrate ourselves, and make once more a fane of the mind. We should treat our minds, that is, ourselves, as innocent and ingenuous children, whose guardians we are, and be careful what objects and what subjects we thrust on their attention. Read not the Times. Read the Eternities. Conventionalities are at length as bad as impurities. Even the facts of science may dust the mind by their dryness, unless they are in a sense effaced each morning, or rather rendered fertile by the dews of fresh and living truth. Knowledge does not come to us by details, but in flashes of light from heaven. Yes, every thought that passes through the mind helps to wear and tear it, and to deepen the ruts, which, as in the streets of Pompeii, evince how much it has been used. How many things there are concerning which we might well deliberate whether we had better know them,—had better let their peddling-carts be driven, even at the slowest trot or walk, over that bridge of glorious span by which we trust to pass at last from the farthest brink of time to the nearest shore of eternity! Have we no culture, no refinement,—but skill only to live coarsely and serve the Devil?—to acquire a little worldly wealth, or fame, or liberty, and make a false show with it, as if we were all husk and shell, with no tender and living kernel to us? Shall our institutions be like those chestnut burs which contain abortive nuts, perfect only to prick the fingers?

America is said to be the arena on which the battle of freedom is to be fought; but surely it cannot be freedom in a merely political sense that is meant. Even if we grant that the American has freed himself from a political tyrant, he is still the slave of an economical and moral tyrant. Now that the republic—the *res-publica*—has been settled, it is time to look after the *res-privata*,—the private state,—to see, as the Roman senate charged its consuls, "*ne quid res-PRIVATA detrimenti caperet*," that the *private* state receive no detriment.

Do we call this the land of the free? What is it to be free from King George and continue the slaves of King Prejudice? What is it to be born free and not

24. Pompeii—ancient Roman city near Naples, buried in an eruption by Vesuvius (A.D. 79), and excavated in modern times. 40-41. "*ne . . . caperet*"—The legal charge given to the consuls in time of danger in the Roman Republic was that they should take care the republic (*res publica*) received no harm.

to live free? What is the value of any political freedom, but as a means to moral freedom? Is it a freedom to be slaves, or a freedom to be free, of which we boast? We are a nation of politicians, concerned about the outmost defenses only of freedom. It is our children's children who may perchance be really free.

5 We tax ourselves unjustly. There is a part of us which is not represented. It is taxation without representation. We quarter troops, we quarter fools and cattle of all sorts upon ourselves. We quarter our gross bodies on our poor souls, till the former eat up all the latter's substance.

10 With respect to a true culture and manhood, we are essentially provincial still, not metropolitan,—mere Jonathans. We are provincial, because we do not find at home our standards; because we do not worship truth, but the reflection of truth; because we are warped and narrowed by an exclusive devotion to trade and commerce and manufactures and agriculture and the like, which are but means, and not the end.

15 So is the English Parliament provincial. Mere country bumpkins, they betray themselves, when any more important question arises for them to settle, the Irish question, for instance,—the English question why did I not say? Their natures are subdued to what they work in. Their "good breeding" respects only secondary objects. The finest manners in the world are awkward-  
20 ness and fatuity when contrasted with a finer intelligence. They appear but as the fashions of past days,—mere courtliness, knee-buckles and small-clothes, out of date. It is the vice, but not the excellence of manners, that they are continually being deserted by the character; they are cast-off clothes or shells, claiming the respect which belonged to the living creature. You are presented  
25 with the shells instead of the meat, and it is no excuse generally, that, in the case of some fishes, the shells are of more worth than the meat. The man who thrusts his manners upon me does as if he were to insist on introducing me to his cabinet of curiosities, when I wished to see himself. It was not in this sense that the poet Decker called Christ "the first true gentleman that ever  
30 breathed." I repeat that in this sense the most splendid court in Christendom is provincial, having authority to consult about Transalpine interests only, and not the affairs of Rome. A praetor or proconsul would suffice to settle the questions which absorb the attention of the English Parliament and the American Congress.

35 Government and legislation! these I thought were respectable professions. We have heard of heaven-born Numas, Lycurguses, and Solons, in the history of the world, whose *names* at least may stand for ideal legislators; but think of legislating to *regulate* the breeding of slaves, or the exportation of tobacco! What have divine legislators to do with the exportation or the importation of  
40 tobacco? what humane ones with the breeding of slaves? Suppose you were to submit the question to any son of God,—and has He no children in the Nineteenth century? is it a family which is extinct?—in what condition would you

10. Jonathans—Yankees. 17. Irish question—the problem of the government of Ireland. 29-30. "the first . . . breathed"—See note 36, p. 1007. The poet's name was Dekker. 31. Transalpine—across the Alps; that is, the interests of the Vatican. 32. praetor—here used to mean a Roman provincial governor. 32. proconsul—a Roman military commander in charge of a province. 36. Numas—Numa, the legendary original lawgiver of Rome. 36. Lycurguses, and Solons—Lycurgus and Solon—the legendary original lawgivers of Sparta and Athens respectively.

get it again? What shall a State like Virginia say for itself at the last day, in which these have been the principal, the staple productions? What ground is there for patriotism in such a State? I derive my facts from statistical tables which the States themselves have published.

A commerce that whitens every sea in quest of nuts and raisins, and makes 5  
slaves of its sailors for this purpose! I saw, the other day, a vessel which had been wrecked, and many lives lost, and her cargo of rags, juniper berries, and bitter almonds were strewn along the shore. It seemed hardly worth the while to tempt the dangers of the sea between Leghorn and New York for the sake of a cargo of juniper berries and bitter almonds. America sending to the Old 10  
World for her bitters! Is not the sea-brine, is not shipwreck, bitter enough to make the cup of life go down here? Yet such, to a great extent, is our boasted commerce; and there are those who style themselves statesmen and philosophers who are so blind as to think that progress and civilization depend on precisely this kind of interchange and activity,—the activity of flies about a 15  
molasses-hogshead. Very well, observes one, if men were oysters. And very well, answer I, if men were mosquitoes.

Lieutenant Herndon, whom our Government sent to explore the Amazon, and, it is said, to extend the area of slavery, observed that there was wanting there “an industrious and active population, who know what the comforts of 20  
life are, and who have artificial wants to draw out the great resources of the country.” But what are the “artificial wants” to be encouraged? Not the love of luxuries, like the tobacco and slaves of, I believe, his native Virginia, nor the ice and granite and other material wealth of our native New England; nor are “the great resources of a country” that fertility or barrenness of soil 25  
which produces these. The chief want, in every State that I have been into, was a high and earnest purpose in its inhabitants. This alone draws out “the great resources” of Nature, and at last taxes her beyond her resources; for man naturally dies out of her. When we want culture more than potatoes, and illumination more than sugar-plums, then the great resources of a world 30  
are taxed and drawn out, and the result, or staple production, is, not slaves, nor operatives, but men,—those rare fruits called heroes, saints, poets, philosophers, and redeemers.

In short, as a snow-drift is formed where there is a lull in the wind, so, one would say, where there is a lull of truth, an institution springs up. But the 35  
truth blows right on over it, nevertheless, and at length blows it down.

What is called politics is comparatively something so superficial and inhuman, that practically I have never fairly recognized that it concerns me at all. The newspapers, I perceive, devote some of their columns specially to politics or government without charge; and this, one would say, is all that saves it; 40  
but as I love literature and to some extent the truth also, I never read those columns at any rate. I do not wish to blunt my sense of right so much. I have not got to answer for having read a single President’s Message. A strange age

18. Herndon—William Lewis Herndon (1813-57), naval officer from Virginia, who with Lieutenant Lardner Gibbon explored the Amazon. Herndon’s book was entitled *Exploration of the Valley of the Amazon* (1853; the second volume was by Gibbon, 1854). Thoreau’s hostility is due to the fact that Herndon was a Virginian, and that his book approves of Brazilian slavery. The quotation (lines 20-22) seems to be a paraphrase of a passage on p. 281 in Herndon.

of the world this, when empires, kingdoms, and republics come a-begging to a private man's door, and utter their complaints at his elbow! I cannot take up a newspaper but I find that some wretched government or other, hard pushed, and on its last legs, is interceding with me, the reader, to vote for it,—  
 5 more importunate than an Italian beggar; and if I have a mind to look at its certificate, made, perchance, by some benevolent merchant's clerk, or the skipper that brought it over, for it cannot speak a word of English itself, I shall probably read of the eruption of some Vesuvius, or the overflowing of some Po, true or forged, which brought it into this condition. I do not hesitate, in  
 10 such a case, to suggest work, or the almshouse; or why not keep its castle in silence, as I do commonly? The poor President, what with preserving his popularity and doing his duty, is completely bewildered. The newspapers are the ruling power. Any other government is reduced to a few marines at Fort Independence. If a man neglects to read the Daily Times, government will go  
 15 down on its knees to him, for this is the only treason in these days.

Those things which now most engage the attention of men, as politics and the daily routine, are, it is true, vital functions of human society, but should be unconsciously performed, like the corresponding functions of the physical body. They are *infra*-human, a kind of vegetation. I sometimes awake to a  
 20 half-consciousness of them going on about me, as a man may become conscious of some of the processes of digestion in a morbid state, and so have the dyspepsia, as it is called. It is as if a thinker submitted himself to be rasped by the great gizzard of creation. Politics is, as it were, the gizzard of society, full of grit and gravel, and the two political parties are its two opposite halves,—  
 25 sometimes split into quarters, it may be, which grind on each other. Not only individuals, but states, have thus a confirmed dyspepsia, which expresses itself, you can imagine by what sort of eloquence. Thus our life is not altogether a forgetting, but also, alas! to a great extent, a remembering, of that which we should never have been conscious of, certainly not in our waking hours. Why  
 30 should we not meet, not always as dyspeptics, to tell our bad dreams, but sometimes as *eupeptics*, to congratulate each other on the ever-glorious morning? I do not make an exorbitant demand, surely.

11. *President*—In 1863 the "poor President" would be Lincoln. 13-14. *Fort Independence*—fort on Castle Island in Boston Harbor. 19. *infra*—below. 28. *forgetting*—Cf. Wordsworth's "Intimations" Ode, sec. v: "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting."

# JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

1819-1891

## I. "STRIVING PARNASSUS TO CLIMB" (1819-1846)

- 1819 February 22, born at "Elmwood," Cambridge, Massachusetts, the sixth child of the Rev. Charles Lowell of the West (Unitarian) Church, Boston, and Harriet Spence Lowell of Portsmouth, New Hampshire.
- 1828 Entered the school of William Wells, Cambridge, to prepare for Harvard.
- 1834 Admitted to Harvard.
- 1838 June 25, "rusticated," sent to Concord for neglect of college work. In August his class poem was recited at commencement, but not by Lowell.
- 1838-1840 Attended Harvard Law School. Period of restlessness. Emotional love of literature.
- 1839 May, "Threnody on an Infant" published under the signature of Hugh Perceval in the *Southern Literary Messenger*.
- 1840 Entered law office upon graduation from law school. In August, became engaged to Maria White. In November, Lowell attended the Chardon Street Antislavery Convention.
- 1841 January, published *A Year's Life and Other Poems*. Began contributing verse to *Graham's Magazine*. In November "The Old Dramatists" appeared in the *Boston Miscellany*.
- 1842 Abandoned the law as a career. Further magazine contributions.
- 1843 January, began editing the *Pioneer* (three issues), with Robert Carter. December, published *Poems*.
- 1844 December 26, married Maria White (died October 27, 1853).
- 1845 Became editorial writer in Philadelphia on the staff of the *Pennsylvania Freeman*, an abolitionist periodical.

## II. THE MAN OF LETTERS (1846-1855)

- 1846 January, *Conversations on Some of the Old Poets* published (some of the material from contributions in the *Boston Miscellany*). May, severed connection with the *Freeman*; returned to "Elmwood." Further abolitionist articles in the *London Daily News* and the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, including the first of *The Biglow Papers* in the *Boston Courier*, June 17. December 31, Blanche Lowell born (died March, 1847).
- 1847 September 9, Mabel Lowell born.
- 1848 Published *The Fable for Critics*, the first series of *The Biglow Papers*, *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, and *Poems*, 2 vols.
- 1849 July 16, Rose Lowell born (died February, 1850).
- 1850 December 22, Walter Lowell born (died April, 1852).
- 1851 July, sailed for Europe with his family, spending the winter in Rome, and the summer of 1852 in England, meeting literary men.



- 1852 October, returned to United States with Thackeray and A. H. Clough.
- 1853 "A Moosehead Journal" published in *Putnam's Magazine* for November.
- 1854 Published "Fireside Travels" in *Putnam's* (April and May); and "Leaves from my Italian Journal" in *Graham's* (April, May, July).

### III. PROFESSOR AND PUBLIC MAN (1855-1877)

- 1855 Lectured in Boston on the English poets. Appointed Smith professor of modern languages at Harvard to succeed Longfellow, sailing for Europe in June for study in Germany. Spent the spring in Italy.
- 1856 August, returned to Cambridge.
- 1857 September, married Frances Dunlap (died February 19, 1885). Began teaching at Harvard. Editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* (first issue, November).
- 1859 Attended meetings of the Saturday Club (Holmes, Longfellow, Emerson, Agassiz, Hawthorne, and others).
- 1861 May, resigned editorship of the *Atlantic*. Published *The Biglow Papers: Second Series*. War poems and political essays.
- 1864 January, made editor of the *North American Review* with C. E. Norton. *Fireside Travels* published.
- 1865 July 21, recited the "Commemoration Ode" at Harvard (published in the September *Atlantic*).
- 1869 "On a Certain Condensation in Foreigners" in the *Atlantic* for January. Published *Under the Willows*.
- 1870 Published *Among My Books* and *The Cathedral*.
- 1871 Published *My Study Windows*.
- 1872 Resigned from the *North American Review* and from Harvard, and went abroad, receiving honorary degrees from Oxford (1873) and Cambridge (1874).
- 1874 July, returned to the United States and to Harvard. Reëmergence of political interests.
- 1875 Delivered "Ode" at Concord Centennial, April 19; and "Under the Old Elm," July 3. *Among My Books* (second series) published.
- 1876 June, delegate to the National Republican Convention; July 4, delivered "Ode for the Fourth of July, 1876."

### IV. THE DIPLOMAT (1877-1891)

- 1877 June, appointed United States minister to Spain, sailing July 14.
- 1880 January, appointed ambassador to Great Britain, reaching London March 7. During his ambassadorship Lowell delivered various addresses in the British Isles, the most important of which was "Democracy," given at Birmingham, October 6, 1884.
- 1885 June, Lowell returned to the United States.
- 1887 Delivered Lowell Institute lectures. *Democracy and Other Addresses* published.
- 1888 *Heartsease and Rue* published; *Political Essays* published. Visit to Europe, returning December, 1888.
- 1889 Last trip abroad.
- 1890 Edited the ten-volume edition of his *Writings*.
- 1891 Lowell died at "Elmwood" August 12. *Latest Literary Essays* published.
- 1892 *The Old English Dramatists* published.

**BIOGRAPHIES:** The standard life is H. E. Scudder, *James Russell Lowell: A Biography*, Houghton Mifflin, 1906. See also *Letters of James Russell Lowell*, ed. by C. E. Norton, Houghton Mifflin, 1894, 2 vols.; *New Letters of James Russell Lowell*, ed. by M. A. DeW. Howe, Harper, 1932; E. E. Hale, Jr., *James Russell Lowell and His Friends*, Houghton Mifflin, 1899; Ferris Greenslet, *James Russell Lowell, His Life and Work*, Houghton Mifflin, 1905; R. C. Beatty, *James Russell Lowell*, Vanderbilt University Press, 1942.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY AND EDITIONS:** G. W. Cooke, *A Bibliography of James Russell Lowell*, Houghton Mifflin, 1906; L. S. Livingston, *A Bibliography of the First Editions in Book Form of . . . James Russell Lowell*, DeVinne Press, 1914; *Literary History of the United States*, Vol. III, pp. 628-34.

*The Writings of James Russell Lowell*, Houghton Mifflin, 1890, 10 vols. To this Vol. XI (*Latest Literary Essays and Addresses*) and Vol. XII (*The Old English Dramatists*) were added in 1891 and 1892. The Elmwood edition, 1904, 16 vols., is the most comprehensive, including three volumes of letters. Harry Clark and Norman Foerster, edds., *James Russell Lowell: Representative Selections*, American Book Co., 1947.

All the fairies brought their gifts to Lowell's cradle save only the fairy who might have given him that unity of purpose which makes Emerson or Thoreau so completely individual. For Lowell's talents show in formal ode and in humorous verse, in political address and historical essay, in interpretative criticism and delightful letter; only, amid this profusion, the student is sometimes hard put to it to find the essential thing that is Lowell, whom he remembers as the author of this or that work, the work always coming between him and its author. Not all readers of Lowell feel that this diversity of accomplishment masks the deeper personality, but many do, and it is one of the tasks of the student to try to account for the varying judgments which have been passed upon him.

One important element in the problem is the history of Lowell's own development and change. Born into the proper Massachusetts family, he also followed the pattern familiar in many such families of radicalism in youth and conservatism in later years. He began as a mystic, a romanticist, and an advocate of abolition; he ended with his mysticism diminished, a partial repudiation of romanticism, and a condemnation of much in the Reconstruction period that he could not approve, though his essential faith in democracy—at least in his version of democracy—was not shaken. His address on that subject is an almost classic example of the interpretation of political democracy common to men of his standing in his generation. His essay on Rousseau (with which, if the student has time, he should read Lowell's essay on Thoreau) reveals how much of his earlier sentimental romanticism Lowell came to repudiate. But his wit remained constant, his scholarly interests never ceased, and he remained, and remains, by reason of his standards of judgment and his insight, one of the two or three foremost American critics. His poetry has been variously judged; there is always about it something of an air of improvisation, but at its best the intent is noble, the diction usually grave and pure, and if the rhythms are seldom cunning, the cadences are often full and musical.

## RHOECUS

"Rhoecus" first appeared in the *Poems* of 1844, at which time it was longer by fifty lines of moral application of the fable. These disappeared when the poem was republished in the two-volume *Poems* of 1849. By a curious coincidence Walter

Savage Landor published a poem entitled "The Hamadryad" setting forth the same story in 1846. The tale goes back to a lost Greek writer of the fifth century B.C. named Charon of Lampsacus, and is preserved only in some learned annotations on Theocritus and Apollonius Rhodius. In the original, Rhoecus agrees to forego the society of women.

God sends his teachers unto every age,  
 To every clime, and every race of men,  
 With revelations fitted to their growth  
 And shape of mind, nor gives the realm of Truth  
 Into the selfish rule of one sole race: 5  
 Therefore each form of worship that hath swayed  
 The life of man, and given it to grasp  
 The master-key of knowledge, reverence,  
 Infolds some germs of goodness and of right;  
 Else never had the eager soul, which loathes 10  
 The slothful down of pampered ignorance,  
 Found in it even a moment's fitful rest.

There is an instinct in the human heart  
 Which makes that all the fables it hath coined,  
 To justify the reign of its belief 15  
 And strengthen it by beauty's right divine,  
 Veil in their inner cells a mystic gift,  
 Which, like the hazel twig, in faithful hands,  
 Points surely to the hidden springs of truth.  
 For, as in nature naught is made in vain, 20  
 But all things have within their hull of use  
 A wisdom and a meaning which may speak  
 Of spiritual secrets to the ear  
 Of spirit; so, in whatso'er the heart  
 Hath fashioned for a solace to itself, 25  
 To make its inspirations suit its creed,  
 And from the niggard hands of falsehood wring  
 Its needful food of truth, there ever is  
 A sympathy with Nature, which reveals,  
 Not less than her own works, pure gleams of light 30  
 And earnest parables of inward lore.  
 Hear now this fairy legend of old Greece,  
 As full of gracious youth, and beauty still  
 As the immortal freshness of that grace  
 Carved for all ages on some Attic frieze. 35

A youth named Rhoecus, wandering in the wood,  
 Saw an old oak just trembling to its fall,  
 And, feeling pity of so fair a tree,  
 He propped its gray trunk with admiring care,  
 And with a thoughtless footstep loitered on. 40  
 But, as he turned, he heard a voice behind  
 That murmured "Rhoecus!" 'Twas as if the leaves,  
 Stirred by a passing breath, had murmured it,

18. hazel twig—A forked, or bent, hazel twig is supposed to be useful in locating underground water.

And, while he paused bewildered, yet again  
 It murmured "Rhoecus!" softer than a breeze. 45  
 He started and beheld with dizzy eyes  
 What seemed the substance of a happy dream  
 Stand there before him, spreading a warm glow  
 Within the green glooms of the shadowy oak.  
 It seemed a woman's shape, yet far too fair 50  
 To be a woman, and with eyes too meek  
 For any that were wont to mate with gods.  
 All naked like a goddess stood she there,  
 And like a goddess all too beautiful  
 To feel the guilt-born earthliness of shame. 55  
 "Rhoecus, I am the Dryad of this tree,"  
 Thus she began, dropping her low-toned words  
 Serene, and full, and clear, as drops of dew,  
 "And with it I am doomed to live and die;  
 The rain and sunshine are my caterers, 60  
 Nor have I other bliss than simple life;  
 Now ask me what thou wilt, that I can give,  
 And with a thankful joy it shall be thine."

Then Rhoecus, with a flutter at the heart,  
 Yet, by the prompting of such beauty, bold, 65  
 Answered: "What is there that can satisfy  
 The endless craving of the soul but love?  
 Give me thy love, or but the hope of that  
 Which must be evermore my nature's goal."  
 After a little pause she said again, 70  
 But with a glimpse of sadness in her tone,  
 "I give it, Rhoecus, though a perilous gift;  
 An hour before the sunset meet me here."  
 And straightway there was nothing he could see  
 But the green glooms beneath the shadowy oak, 75  
 And not a sound came to his straining ears  
 But the low trickling rustle of the leaves,  
 And far away upon an emerald slope  
 The falter of an idle shepherd's pipe.

Now, in those days of simpleness and faith, 80  
 Men did not think that happy things were dreams  
 Because they overstepped the narrow bourn  
 Of likelihood, but reverently deemed  
 Nothing too wondrous or too beautiful  
 To be the guerdon of a daring heart. 85  
 So Rhoecus made no doubt that he was blest,  
 And all along unto the city's gate  
 Earth seemed to spring beneath him as he walked,  
 The clear, broad sky looked bluer than its wont,  
 And he could scarce believe he had not wings, 90  
 Such sunshine seemed to glitter through his veins  
 Instead of blood, so light he felt and strange.

Young Rhoecus had a faithful heart enough,  
 But one that in the present dwelt too much,  
 And, taking with blithe welcome whatsoe'er 95  
 Chance gave of joy, was wholly bound in that,  
 Like the contented peasant of a vale,  
 Deemed it the world, and never looked beyond.  
 So, haply meeting in the afternoon  
 Some comrades who were playing at the dice, 100  
 He joined them, and forgot all else beside.

The dice were rattling at the merriest,  
 And Rhoecus, who had met but sorry luck,  
 Just laughed in triumph at a happy throw,  
 When through the room there hummed a yellow bee 105  
 That buzzed about his ear with down-dropped legs  
 As if to light. And Rhoecus laughed and said,  
 Feeling how red and flushed he was with loss,  
 "By Venus! does he take me for a rose?"  
 And brushed him off with rough, impatient hand. 110  
 But still the bee came back, and thrice again  
 Rhoecus did beat him off with growing wrath.  
 Then through the window flew the wounded bee,  
 And Rhoecus, tracking him with angry eyes,  
 Saw a sharp mountain-peak of Thessaly 115  
 Against the red disk of the setting sun,—  
 And instantly the blood sank from his heart,  
 As if its very walls had caved away.  
 Without a word he turned, and, rushing forth,  
 Ran madly through the city and the gate, 120  
 And o'er the plain, which now the wood's long shade,  
 By the low sun thrown forward broad and dim,  
 Darkened wellnigh unto the city's wall.

Quite spent and out of breath he reached the tree,  
 And, listening fearfully, he heard once more 125  
 The low voice murmur "Rhoecus!" close at hand:  
 Whereat he looked around him, but could see  
 Naught but the deepening glooms beneath the oak.  
 Then sighed the voice, "O Rhoecus! nevermore  
 Shalt thou behold me or by day or night, 130  
 Me, who would fain have blessed thee with a love  
 More ripe and bounteous than ever yet  
 Filled up with nectar any mortal heart:  
 But thou didst scorn my humble messenger,  
 And sent'st him back to me with bruised wings. 135  
 We spirits only show to gentle eyes,  
 We ever ask an undivided love,  
 And he who scorns the least of Nature's works  
 Is thenceforth exiled and shut out from all.  
 Farewell! for thou canst never see me more." 140

Then Rhoecus beat his breast, and groaned aloud,  
 And cried, "Be pitifull forgive me yet  
 This once, and I shall never need it more!"  
 "Alas!" the voice returned, "'tis thou art blind,  
 Not I unmerciful; I can forgive, 145  
 But have no skill to heal thy spirit's eyes;  
 Only the soul hath power o'er itself."  
 With that again there murmured "Nevermore!"  
 And Rhoecus after heard no other sound,  
 Except the rattling of the oak's crisp leaves, 150  
 Like the long surf upon a distant shore,  
 Raking the sea-worn pebbles up and down.  
 The night had gathered round him: o'er the plain  
 The city sparkled with its thousand lights,  
 And sounds of revel fell upon his ear 155  
 Harshly and like a curse; above, the sky,  
 With all its bright sublimity of stars  
 Deepened, and on his forehead smote the breeze:  
 Beauty was all around him and delight,  
 But from that eve he was alone on earth. 160

## TO THE DANDELION

This poem was first published in *Graham's Magazine*, January, 1845, and then included in the *Poems, Second Series*, of 1848.

Dear common flower, that grow'st beside the way,  
 Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold,  
 First pledge of blithsome May,  
 Which children pluck, and, full of pride uphold,  
 High-hearted buccaneers, o'erjoyed that they 5  
 An Eldorado in the grass have found,  
 Which not the rich earth's ample round  
 May match in wealth, thou art more dear to me  
 Than all the prouder summer-blooms may be.  
 Gold such as thine ne'er drew the Spanish prow 10  
 Through the primeval hush of Indian seas,  
 Nor wrinkled the lean brow  
 Of age, to rob the lover's heart of ease;  
 'Tis the Spring's largess, which she scatters now  
 To rich and poor alike, with lavish hand, 15  
 Though most hearts never understand  
 To take it at God's values, but pass by  
 The offered wealth with unrewarded eye.  
 Thou art my tropics and mine Italy;  
 To look at thee unlocks a warmer clime; 20  
 The eyes thou givest me  
 Are in the heart, and heed not space or time:  
 Not in mid June the golden-cuirassed bee

Feels a more summer-like warm ravishment  
     In the white lily's breezy tent, 25  
     His fragrant Sybaris, than I, when first  
     From the dark green thy yellow circles burst.  
  
     Then think I of deep shadows on the grass,  
 Of meadows where in sun the cattle graze,  
     Where, as the breezes pass, 30  
 The gleaming rushes lean a thousand ways,  
     Of leaves that slumber in a cloudy mass,  
 Or whiten in the wind, of waters blue  
     That from the distance sparkle through  
     Some woodland gap, and of a sky above, 35  
     Where one white cloud like a stray lamb doth move.  
  
     My childhood's earliest thoughts are linked with thee;  
 The sight of thee calls back the robin's song,  
     Who, from the dark old tree  
 Beside the door, sang clearly all day long, 40  
     And I, secure in childish piety,  
 Listened as if I heard an angel sing  
     With news from heaven, which he could bring  
     Fresh every day to my untainted ears  
     When birds and flowers and I were happy peers. 45  
  
     How like a prodigal doth nature seem,  
 When thou, for all thy gold, so common art!  
     Thou teachest me to deem  
 More sacredly of every human heart,  
     Since each reflects in joy its scanty gleam 50  
 Of heaven, and could some wondrous secret show,  
     Did we but pay the love we owe,  
     And with a child's undoubting wisdom look  
     On all these living pages of God's book.

## THE BIGLOW PAPERS

### FIRST SERIES

The first number of what became *The Biglow Papers, First Series*, was written rapidly by Lowell and published in the *Boston Courier*, June 17, 1846; and that Lowell did not at first realize the golden vein of literature he had uncovered is evident when one finds him writing to S. H. Gray the previous day and referring to his "squib." The series grew under his hand to nine numbers, which were cumulated in book form and published in 1848. Taking advantage of his creation of the mythical Ezekiel Biglow as a means of introducing Hosea to the public, Lowell also added the Rev. Homer Wilbur to the dramatis personae of the equally mythical town of Jaalam. Mr. Wilbur is the learned and pedantic parson of Jaalam, who has undertaken to edit the poetical works of Hosea with introductions, comments, and notes; his prose annotations are signed "H.W." Further to increase the mystification and the fun, Lowell, or the Rev. Mr. Wilbur for him, also prefaced the volume with laudatory comments on Hosea's poetry from entirely imaginary New England country newspapers.

**26. Sybaris**—an ancient Greek city in southern Italy, known for its luxury and effeminacy.

## No. I

## A LETTER

FROM MR. EZEKIEL BIGLOW OF JAALAM TO THE HON. JOSEPH T. BUCKINGHAM, EDITOR OF  
THE BOSTON COURIER, INCLOSING A POEM OF HIS SON, MR. HOSEA BIGLOW

JAYLEM, june 1846.

MISTER EDDYTER:—Our Hosea wuz down to Boston last week, and he see a  
cruetin Sarjunt a struttin round as popler as a hen with 1 chicking, with 2 fellers a  
drummin and ffin arter him like all nater. the sarjunt he thout Hosea hed n't gut  
his i teeth cut cos he looked a kindo's though he'd jest com down, so he cal'lated 5  
to hook him in, but Hosy woodn't take none o' his sarse for all he hed much as 20  
Rooster's tales stuck onto his hat and eenamost enuf brass a bobbin up and down  
on his shoulders and figureed onto his coat and trousis, let alone wut nater hed sot in  
his featers, to make a 6 pounder out on.

wal, Hosea he com home considerabal riled, and arter I'd gone to bed I heern Him 10  
a thrashin round like a short-tailed Bull in fli-time. The old Woman ses she to me  
ses she, Zekle, ses she, our Hosee's gut the chollery or suthin anuther ses she, don't  
you Bee skeered, ses I, he's oney amakin pottery \* ses i, he's ollers on hand at that ere  
busynes like Da & martin, and shure enuf, cum mornin, Hosy he cum down stares 15  
full chizzle, hare on eend and cote tales flyin, and sot rite of to go reed his varses to  
Parson Wilbur bein he haint aney grate shows o' book larnin himself, bimeby he cum  
back and sed the parson wuz drefle tickled with 'em as i hoop you will Be, and  
said they wuz True grit.

Hosea ses taint hardly fair to call 'em hisn now, cos the parson kind o' slicked off  
sum o' the last varses, but he told Hosee he didn't want to put his ore in to tetch to 20  
the Rest on 'em, bein they wuz verry well As thay wuz, and then Hosy ses he sed  
suthin a nuther about Simplex Mundishes or sum sech feller, but I guess Hosea kind  
o' didn't hear him, for I never hearn o' nobody o' that name in this villadge, and  
I've lived here man and boy 76 year cum next tater diggin, and thair aint no wheres  
a kitting spryer'n I be. 25

If you print 'em I wish you 'd jest let folks know who hosy's father is, cos my  
ant Keziah used to say it's nater to be curus ses she, she aint livin though and he's  
a likely kind o' lad.

EZEKIEL BIGLOW

Thrash away, you'll hev to rattle 30  
On them kittle-drums o' yourn,—  
'Taint a knowin' kind o' cattle  
Thet is ketched with mouldy corn;

\* *Aut insanit, aut versos facit.*—H. W.

3. **cruetin Sarjunt**—recruiting sergeant. It was still the custom to advertise for volunteers  
for the American army by sending out a fifer and a drummer, or either, and a sergeant. Lowell's  
digs at the American army uniform as it then was can be illuminated by consulting prints of the  
period. 7. **eenamost**—almost. 12. **chollery**—cholera. 12. **suthin anuther**—something or  
other. 13. **pottery**—poetry. The learned footnote by Mr. Wilbur means "He is either insane  
or is making verses." 14. **Da & martin**—Day and Martin, proprietors of the most advertised  
shoeblacking of the day, who made known the merit of their wares in rhyme. 15. **full chizzle**—  
full chisel, full force. 15. **eend**—end. 22. **Simplex Mundishes**—Hosea's inaccurate remembrance  
of the learned minister's Latin *simplex munditiis*—neat, but not gaudy; naïve, or "green," in  
matters of sophistication.



Put in stiff, you fifer feller,  
 Let folks see how spry you be,—  
 Guess you'll toot till you are yellor  
 'Fore you git ahold o' me!

5 Thet air flag's a leetle rotten,  
 Hope it aint your Sunday's best;—  
 Fact! it takes a sight o' cotton  
 To stuff out a soger's chest:  
 Sence we farmers hev to pay fer 't,  
 10 Ef you must wear humps like these,  
 S'posin' you should try salt hay fer 't,  
 It would du ez slick ez grease.

'Twould n't suit them Southun fellers,  
 They 're a drefle graspin' set,  
 15 We must ollers blow the bellers  
 Wen they want their irons het;  
 May be it's all right ez preachin',  
 But my narves it kind o' grates,  
 Wen I see the overreachin'  
 20 O' them nigger-drivin' States.

Them thet rule us, them slave-traders,  
 Haint they cut a thunderin' swarth  
 (Helped by Yankee renegaders),  
 Thru the vartu o' the North!  
 25 We begin to think it's nater  
 To take sarse an' not be riled;—  
 Who'd expect to see a tater  
 All on eend at bein' biled?

Ez fer war, I call it murder,—  
 30 There you hev it plain an' flat;  
 I don't want to go no furdur  
 Than my Testyment fer that;  
 God hez sed so plump an' fairly,  
 It's ez long ez it is broad,  
 35 An' you've gut to git up airly  
 Ef you want to take in God.

'Taint your eppyletts an' feathers  
 Make the thing a grain more right;  
 'Taint afollerin' your bell-wethers  
 40 Will excuse ye in His sight;  
 Ef you take a sword an' dror it,  
 An' go stick a feller thru,  
 Guv'ment aint to answer for it,  
 God'll send the bill to you.

7. cotton—It was freely charged among the abolitionists that the Mexican War was fought to increase the area profitable for cotton-growing and slavery. 22. swarth—swathe.

- Wut's the use o' meetin'-goin'  
 Every Sabbath, wet or dry,  
 Ef it's right to go amowin'  
 Feller-men like oats an' rye?  
 I dunno but wut it's pooty 5  
 Trainin' round in bobtail coats,—  
 But it's curus Christian dooty  
 This 'ere cuttin' folks's throats.
- They may talk o' Freedom's airy  
 Tell they're pupple in the face,— 10  
 It's a grand gret cemetary  
 Fer the barthrights of our race;  
 They jest want this Californy  
 So's to lug new slave-states in  
 To abuse ye, an' to scorn ye, 15  
 An' to plunder ye like sin.
- Aint it cute to see a Yankee  
 Take sech everlastin' pains,  
 All to git the Devil's thankee  
 Helpin' on 'em weld their chains? 20  
 Wy, it's jest ez clear ez figgers,  
 Clear ez one an' one makes two,  
 Chaps thet make black slaves o' niggers  
 Want to make wite slaves o' you.
- Tell ye jest the eend I've come to 25  
 Arter cipherin' plaguy smart,  
 An' it makes a handy sum, tu,  
 Any gump could larn by heart;  
 Laborin' man an' laborin' woman  
 Hev one glory an' one shame. 30  
 Ev'y thin' thet's done inhuman  
 Injers all on 'em the same.
- 'Taint by turnin' out to hack folks  
 You're agoin' to git your right,  
 Nor by lookin' down on black folks 35  
 Coz you're put upon by wite;  
 Slavery aint o' nary color,  
 'Taint the hide thet makes it wus,  
 All it keers fer in a feller  
 'S jest to make him fill its pus. 40
- Want to tackle *me* in, du ye?  
 I expect you'll hev to wait;

5. *pooty*—pretty. 9. *airy*—eyrie, as of an eagle. 13. *Californy*—The complicated story of the “freeing” of California from Mexico involves the congressional debate over its admittance to statehood. This was eventually done as part of the Compromise of 1850. Lowell’s dig is at the offer of the slave states to admit California as a free state, securing in return the admission of other states (to be formed from territory torn from Mexico) as slave states.

## JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

Wen cold lead puts daylight thru ye  
 You'll begin to kal'late;  
 S'pose the crows wun't fall to pickin'  
 All the carkiss from your bones,  
 5 Coz you helped to give a lickin'  
 To them poor half-Spanish drones?

Jest go home an' ask our Nancy  
 Wether I'd be sech a goose  
 Ez to jine ye,—guess you'd fancy  
 10 The eternal bung wuz loose!  
 She wants me fer home consumption,  
 Let alone the hay's to mow,—  
 Ef you're arter folks o' gumption,  
 You've a darned long row to hoe.

Take them editors thet's crowin'  
 Like a cockerel three months old,—  
 Don't ketch any on 'em goin',  
 Though they *be* so blasted bold;  
 15 *Aint* they a prime lot o' fellers?  
 'Fore they think on't guess they 'll sprout  
 (Like a peach thet's got the yellers),  
 With the meanness bustin' out.

Wal, go 'long to help 'em stealin'  
 Bigger pens to cram with slaves,  
 25 Help the men thet's ollers dealin'  
 Insults on your fathers' graves;  
 Help the strong to grind the feeble,  
 Help the many agin the few,  
 Help the men thet call your people  
 30 Witewashed slaves an' peddlin' crew!

Massachusetts, God forgive her,  
 She's akneelin' with the rest,  
 She, thet ough' to ha' clung ferever  
 In her grand old eagle-nest;  
 35 She thet ough' to stand so fearless  
 W'ile the wracks are round her hurled,  
 Holdin' up a beacon peerless  
 To the oppressed of all the world!

Ha'n't they sold your colored seamen?  
 Ha'n't they made your env'ys w'iz?  
 40 *Wut*'ll make ye act like freemen?  
*Wut*'ll git your dander riz?

2. *kal'late*—calculate; the rhythm requires three syllables. 6. *half-Spanish drones*—the Mexicans. During the Mexican War the Americans won every battle. 21. *yellers*—yellows, a disease of peach trees, in which sterile shoots are produced and the leaves turn yellow. 40. *env'ys w'iz*—envoys whizz: a reference to the scant courtesy with which American representatives were sometimes received abroad in the opening decades of the last century.

Come, I'll tell ye wut I'm thinkin'  
 Is our dooty in this fix,  
 They 'd ha' done 't ez quick ez winkin'  
 In the days o' seventy-six.

Clang the bells in every steeple, 5  
 Call all true men to disown  
 The tradoozers of our people,  
 The enslavers o' their own;  
 Let our dear old Bay State proudly  
 Put the trumpet to her mouth, 10  
 Let her ring this messidge loudly  
 In the ears of all the South:—

"I'll return ye good fer evil  
 Much ez we frail mortils can,  
 But I wun't go help the Devil 15  
 Makin' man the cus o' man;  
 Call me coward, call me traiter,  
 Jest ez suits your mean idees,—  
 Here I stand a tyrant-hater,  
 An' the friend o' God an' Peace!" 20

Ef I'd *my* way I hed ruther  
 We should go to work an' part,—  
 They take one way, we take t' other,  
 Guess it wouldn't break my heart;  
 Man hed ough' to put asunder 25  
 Them thet God has noways jined;  
 An' I shouldn't gretly wonder  
 Ef there's thousands o' my mind.

[The first recruiting sergeant on record I conceive to have been that individual who is mentioned in the Book of Job as *going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it*. Bishop Latimer will have him to have been a bishop, but to me that other calling would appear more congenial. The sect of Cainites is not yet extinct, who esteemed the first-born of Adam to be the most worthy, not only because of that privilege of primogeniture, but inasmuch as he was able to overcome and slay his younger brother. That was a wise saying of the famous Marquis Pescara to the Papal Legate, that *it was impossible for men to serve Mars and Christ at the same time*. Yet in time past the profession of arms was judged to be *κατ' ἐξοχήν* that of a gentleman, nor does this opinion want for strenuous upholders even in our day. Must we suppose, then, that the profession of Christianity was only intended for losels, or, at best, to afford an opening for plebeian ambition? Or shall we hold with that nicely metaphysical Pomeranian, Captain Vratz, who was Count Königsmark's chief instrument in the murder of Mr. Thynne, that the Scheme of Salvation has been arranged with an especial eye to the necessities of the upper classes, and that "God would consider *a gentleman* and deal with him suitably to the condition and profession he had placed him in"? It may be said of us all, *Exemplo plus quam ratione vivimus*.—H. W.] 30 35 40

June 17, 1846

25-26. Man . . . jined—Cf. Mark 10:9. '29. first recruiting sergeant—Satan. Cf. Job 1. The quotation is from the seventh verse. 30. Latimer—Hugh Latimer (1490-1555), one of the chief promoters of the English Reformation. 32. Cainites—a sect of the second century, the tenet of which was that Cain derived his existence from the higher powers, and Abel from the lower. 34. Pescara—Fernando Francesco Davalos, Marquis of Pescara (1489-1525), Italian soldier, who defeated Francis I of France in 1525. 36. *κατ' ἐξοχήν*—especially. 38. losels—profligate fellows. 41-42. "God . . . in"—The quotation is apparently a reminiscence of a passage in Evelyn's *Diary* under date of 10 March, 1682. Thomas Thynne of Longleat married

## No. III

## WHAT MR. ROBINSON THINKS

First published in the *Boston Courier*, November 2, 1847, and gathered into *The Biglow Papers, First Series*. Lowell wrote to Thomas Hughes (September 13, 1859) that he had written the poem at one sitting. John P. Robinson (1799-1864), a leader of the Whig party, had announced in 1847 that he was going to support General Caleb Cushing for governor of Massachusetts on the Democratic ticket. Cushing commanded the Massachusetts troops in the Mexican War. The incumbent was George N. Briggs, elected in 1844, who, running for reëlection, defeated Cushing by a majority of over 14,000. Briggs, of course, was a Whig.

- [A few remarks on the following verses will not be out of place. The satire in them was not meant to have any personal, but only a general, application. Of the gentleman upon whose letter they were intended as a commentary Mr. Biglow had never heard, till he saw the letter itself. The position of the satirist is oftentimes one which he would not have chosen, had the election been left to himself. In attacking bad principles, he is obliged to select some individual who has made himself their exponent, and in whom they are impersonate, to the end that what he says may not, through ambiguity, be dissipated *tenues in auras*. For what says Seneca? *Longum iter per praecepta, breve et efficace per exempla*. A bad principle is comparatively harmless while it continues to be an abstraction, nor can the general mind comprehend it fully till it is printed in that large type which all men can read at sight, namely, the life and character, the sayings and doings, of particular persons. It is one of the cunningest fetches of Satan, that he never exposes himself directly to our arrows, but, still dodging behind this neighbor or that acquaintance, compels us to wound him through them, if at all. He holds our affections as hostages, the while he patches up a truce with our conscience.
- 15 Meanwhile, let us not forget that the aim of the true satirist is not to be severe upon persons, but only upon falsehood, and, as Truth and Falschood start from the same point, and sometimes even go along together for a little way, his business is to follow the path of the latter after it diverges, and to show her floundering in the bog at the end of it. Truth is quite beyond the reach of satire. There is so brave a simplicity in her, that she can no more be made ridiculous than an oak or a pine. The danger of the satirist is, that continual use may deaden his sensibility to the force of language. He becomes more and more liable to strike harder than he knows or intends. He may be careful to put on his boxing-gloves, and yet forget that, the older they grow, the more plainly may the knuckles inside be felt. Moreover, in the heat of contest, the eye is insensibly drawn to the crown of victory, whose tawdry tinsel glitters through that dust of the ring which obscures Truth's wreath of simple leaves. I have sometimes thought that my young friend, Mr. Biglow, needed a monitory hand laid on his arm,—*aliquid sufflaminandus erat*. I have never thought it good husbandry to water the tender plants of reform with *aqua fortis*, yet, where so much is to do in the beds, he were a sorry gardener who should wage a whole day's war with an iron scuffle on those ill weeds that make the garden-walks of life unsightly, when a sprinkle of Attic salt will wither them up. *Est ars etiam maledicendi*, says Scaliger, and truly it is a hard thing to say where the graceful gentleness of the lamb merges in downright sheepishness. We may conclude with worthy and wise Dr. Fuller, that "one may be a lamb in private wrongs, but in hearing general affronts to goodness they are asses which are not lions."—H. W.]

the fifteen-year-old widow of Lord Ogle. Count Königsmark, a suitor of the lady, feeling himself aggrieved, sent Thynne two challenges by Captain Vratz; Thynne retaliated by sending six assassins to murder Königsmark and Vratz; and on February 12, 1682, Vratz and two others murdered Thynne in Pall Mall, for which they were condemned and executed. Königsmark was acquitted of complicity. *Exemplo . . . vivimus* in the last line means: We live by example more than by reason.

7. *tenues in auras*—into thin air. 7. *Seneca*—See the headnote on p. 731. 7-8. *Longum . . . exempla*—It is a long way through precept, but a short and sure one by example. 11. *fetches*—tricks. 26. *aliquid . . . erat*—He needed to be checked a bit—what Ben Jonson said of Shakespeare. 27. *aqua fortis*—strong water; also nitric acid, poison. 28. *scuffle*—weeding hoe. 30. *Est . . . maledicendi*—There is even an art in cursing. 30. *Scaliger*—either Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484-1558), an Italian classical scholar; or Joseph Justus Scaliger (1540-1609). Probably the former. 32. *Fuller*—Thomas Fuller (1608-1661), English divine.

- Guvener B. is a sensible man;  
 He stays to his home an' looks arter his folks;  
 He draws his furrer ez straight ez he can,  
 An' into nobody's tater-patch pokes;  
     But John P. 5  
     Robinson he  
 Sez he wunt vote fer Guvener B.
- My! aint it terrible? Wut shall we du?  
 We can't never choose him o' course,—thet 's flat;  
 Guess we shall hev to come round, (don't you?) 10  
 An' go in fer thunder an' guns, an' all that;  
     Fer John P.  
     Robinson he  
 Sez he wunt vote fer Guvener B.
- General C. is a drefle smart man: 15  
 He's ben on all sides thet give places or pelf;  
 But consistency still wuz a part of his plan,—  
 He's ben true to *one* party,—an' thet is himself;—  
     So John P.  
     Robinson he 20  
 Sez he shall vote fer General C.
- General C. he goes in fer the war;  
 He don't vally principle more 'n an old cud;  
 Wut did God make us raytional creeturs fer,  
 But glory an' gunpowder, plunder an' blood? 25  
     So John P.  
     Robinson he  
 Sez he shall vote fer General C.
- We were gittin' on nicely up here to our village,  
 With good old idees o' wut's right an' wut aint, 30  
 We kind o' thought Christ went agin war an' pillage,  
 An' thet eppyletts worn't the best mark of a saint;  
     But John P.  
     Robinson he  
 Sez this kind o' thing 's an exploded idee. 35
- The side of our country must ollers be took,  
 An' Presidunt Polk, you know, *he* is our country.  
 An' the angel thet writes all our sins in a book  
 Puts the *debit* to him, an' to us the *per contry*;  
     An' John P. 40  
     Robinson he  
 Sez this is his view o' the thing to a T.

1-4. Guvener . . . pokes—The reference is to the Whig sentiment against participating in the Mexican War. 37. Polk—James K. Polk (1795-1849), eleventh President of the United States, during whose administration the Mexican War was fought. 39. *per contry*—per contra: on the other side.

## JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

- Parson Wilbur he calls all these argimunts lies;  
 Sez they're nothin' on airth but jest *fee, faw fum*;  
 An' thet all this big talk of our destinies  
 Is half on it ign'ance, an' t' other half rum;  
 5 But John P.  
 Robinson he  
 Sez it aint no sech thing; an', of course, so must we.
- Parson Wilbur sez *he* never heerd in his life  
 Thet th' Apostles rigged out in their swaller-tail coats,  
 10 An' marched round in front of a drum an' a fife,  
 To git some on 'em office, an' some on 'em votes;  
 But John P.  
 Robinson he  
 Sez they didn't know everythin' down in Judee.
- 15 Wal, it's a marcy we've gut folks to tell us  
 The rights an' the wrongs o' these matters, I vow,—  
 God sends country lawyers, an' other wise fellers,  
 To start the world's team wen it gits in a slough;  
 Fer John P.  
 20 Robinson he  
 Sez the world'll go right, ef he hollers out Gee!

- [The attentive reader will doubtless have perceived in the foregoing poem an allusion to that pernicious sentiment,—“Our country, right or wrong.” It is an abuse of language to call a certain portion of land, much more, certain personages, elevated for the time being to high station, our country. I would not sever nor loosen a single one of those ties by which we are united to the spot of our birth, nor minish by a tittle the respect due to the Magistrate. I love our own Bay State too well to do the one, and as for the other, I have myself for nigh forty years exercised, however unworthily, the function of Justice of the Peace, having been called thereto by the unsolicited kindness of that most excellent man and upright patriot, Caleb Strong. *Patriae fumus igne alieno luculentior* is best qualified with this,—*Ubi libertas, ibi patria*. We are inhabitants of two worlds, and owe a double, but not a divided, allegiance. In virtue of our clay, this little ball of earth exacts a certain loyalty of us, while, in our capacity as spirits, we are admitted citizens of an invisible and holier fatherland. There is a patriotism of the soul whose claim absolves us from our other and terrene fealty. Our true country is that ideal realm which we represent to ourselves under the names of religion, duty, 35 and the like. Our terrestrial organizations are but far-off approaches to so fair a model, and all they are verily traitors who resist not any attempt to divert them from this their original intendment. When, therefore, one would have us to fling up our caps and shout with the multitude,—“*Our country, however bounded!*” he demands of us that we sacrifice the larger to the less, the higher to the lower, and that we yield to the imaginary claims of a few acres of soil our duty and privilege as liegemen of Truth. Our true country is bounded on the north and the south, on the east and the west, by Justice, and when she oversteps that invisible boundary-line by so much as a hair's-breadth, she ceases to be our mother, and chooses rather to be looked upon *quasi noverca*. That is a hard choice when our earthly love of country calls upon us to tread one path and our duty points us to another. We must make as noble and becoming an election as did Penelope between Icarus 40 and Ulysses. Veiling our faces, we must take silently the hand of Duty to follow her. . . . H. W.]  
 45 Nov. 2, 1847

3. *destinies*—Talk of the “manifest destiny” of the Americans to rule the continent was common among the war party. 23. “*Our . . . wrong*”—reference to the celebrated sentiment attributed to Stephen Decatur: “My country—may she be ever right; but right or wrong—my country!” 26. *minish by a tittle*—diminish by an atom. 29. *Strong*—Caleb Strong (1745-1819), governor of Massachusetts during the War of 1812, and, as an ardent Federalist, opposed to that war, as Parson Wilbur is to this one. 29. *Patriae . . . luculentior*—The smoke of one's own country is brighter than the fire of a strange land. 30. *Ubi . . . patria*—Where liberty is, there is my country. 42. *quasi noverca*—as a stepmother. 44-45. *Penelope . . . Ulysses*—Icarus is the father of Penelope in the Odyssey. The reference seems to be to Greek marriage customs. 45. *follow her*—The omitted portions of Parson Wilbur's notes have nothing to do with the poem.

## A FABLE FOR CRITICS

Lowell began the composition of this poem in October, 1847, and by November 13 had written about six hundred lines. As he wrote more and more of it, he dispatched the manuscript in installments to his friend C. F. Briggs, the passages on Alcott (not reprinted here) and Emerson being among the earliest composed. He finally gave the manuscript to Briggs, keeping the copyright in his own name; but composition was interrupted by other literary duties about halfway through the completed version. The whole poem was finished by August, 1848. It is interesting to note that the passage on Oliver Wendell Holmes was an afterthought. Lowell thought highly of the poem at the time of its composition, though its immediate appeal when it was published in 1848 does not seem to have been as great as he had anticipated. The poem belongs to a long line of informal verse criticisms of contemporary men of letters, in most of which Apollo is involved. The immediate predecessor who seems to have suggested the idea to Lowell was Leigh Hunt, in his *Session of the Poets*. Lowell also furnished a title-page and an introduction "To the Reader," all in rhyme, though printed as prose. The plot is so loosely constructed as scarcely to exist. Generally speaking, a critic is describing for Apollo's benefit the characteristics of contemporary men of letters in America. The present selection omits the first five hundred and twenty-six lines printed as verse, as well as the title-page and the "prose" preface.

. . . "There comes Emerson first, whose rich words, every one,  
Are like gold nails in temples to hang trophies on,  
Whose prose is grand verse, while his verse, the Lord knows,  
Is some of it pr— No, 'tis not even prose;  
I'm speaking of metres; some poems have welled 5  
From those rare depths of soul that have ne'er been excelled;  
They're not epics, but that doesn't matter a pin,  
In creating, the only hard thing's to begin;  
A grass-blade's no easier to make than an oak;  
If you've once found the way, you've achieved the grand stroke; 10  
In the worst of his poems are mines of rich matter,  
But thrown in a heap with a crash and a clatter;  
Now it is not one thing nor another alone  
Makes a poem, but rather the general tone,  
The something pervading, uniting the whole, 15  
The before unconceived, unconceivable soul,  
So that just in removing this trifle or that, you  
Take away, as it were, a chief limb of the statue;  
Roots, wood, bark, and leaves, singly perfect may be,  
But, clapt hodge-podge together, they don't make a tree. 20

"But to come back to Emerson (whom by the way,  
I believe we left waiting),—his is, we may say,  
A Greek head on right Yankee shoulders, whose range  
Has Olympus for one pole, for t'other the Exchange;  
He seems, to my thinking, (although I'm afraid 25  
The comparison must, long ere this, have been made),

2. gold nails—*Cf.* Eccles. 12:11. 24. Olympus—the home of the gods, as a symbol of Emerson's idealism; the Exchange, as a symbol of his practical spirit.



A Plotinus-Montaigne, where the Egyptian's gold mist  
 And the Gascon's shrewd wit cheek-by-jowl coexist;  
 All admire, and yet scarcely six converts he's got  
 To I don't (nor they either) exactly know what; 30  
 For though he builds glorious temples, 'tis odd  
 He leaves never a doorway to get in a god.  
 'Tis refreshing to old-fashioned people like me,  
 To meet such a primitive Pagan as he,  
 In whose mind all creation is duly respected 35  
 As parts of himself—just a little projected;  
 And who's willing to worship the stars and the sun,  
 A convert to—nothing but Emerson.  
 So perfect a balance there is in his head,  
 That he talks of things sometimes as if they were dead; 40  
 Life, nature, love, God, and affairs of that sort,  
 He looks at as merely ideas; in short,  
 As if they were fossils stuck round in a cabinet,  
 Of such vast extent that our earth's a mere dab in it;  
 Composed just as he is inclined to conjecture her, 45  
 Namely, one part pure earth, ninety-nine parts pure lecturer;  
 You are filled with delight at his clear demonstration,  
 Each figure, word, gesture, just fits the occasion,  
 With the quiet precision of science he'll sort 'em,  
 But you can't help suspecting the whole a *post mortem*. 50

"There are persons, mole-blind to the soul's make and style,  
 Who insist on a likeness 'twixt him and Carlyle;  
 To compare him with Plato would be vastly fairer,  
 Carlyle's the more burly, but E. is the rarer;  
 He sees fewer objects, but clearer, truelier, 55  
 If C.'s as original, E.'s more peculiar;  
 That he's more of a man you might say of the one,  
 Of the other he's more of an Emerson;  
 C.'s the Titan, as shaggy of mind as of limb,—  
 E. the clear-eyed Olympian, rapid and slim; 60  
 The one's two-thirds Norseman, the other half Greek,  
 Where the one's most abounding, the other's to seek;  
 C.'s generals require to be seen in the mass—  
 E.'s specialties gain if enlarged by the glass;  
 C. gives nature and God his own fits of the blues, 65  
 And rims common-sense things with mystical hues,—  
 E. sits in a mystery calm and intense,  
 And looks coolly around him with sharp common-sense;  
 C. shows you how every-day matters unite  
 With the dim transdiurnal recesses of night,— 70  
 While E., in a plain, preternatural way,  
 Makes mysteries matters of mere every day;

27. Plotinus-Montaigne—Emerson frequently cites Plotinus (see note 8, p. 462) and Montaigne (1553-1592), here called a Gascon because he lived in Bordeaux, in the old region of Gascony. Emerson's oracular wisdom and his skepticism are what Lowell has in mind. 50. *post mortem*—autopsy. 59. Titan—here appropriate, since the Titans were earth-born. 63. *generals*—general propositions. 70. *transdiurnal*—beyond ordinary daylight.

C. draws all his characters quite *à la* Fuseli,—  
 Not sketching their bundles of muscles and thews illy,  
 But he paints with a brush so untamed and profuse, 75  
 They seem nothing but bundles of muscles and thews;  
 E. is rather like Flaxman, lines strait and severe,  
 And a colorless outline, but full, round, and clear;—  
 To the men he thinks worthy he frankly accords  
 The design of a white marble statue in words. 80  
 C. labors to get at the centre, and then  
 Take a reckoning from there of his actions and men;  
 E. calmly assumes the said centre as granted,  
 And, given himself, has whatever is wanted.

“He has imitators in scores, who omit 85  
 No part of the man but his wisdom and wit,—  
 Who go carefully o’er the sky-blue of his brain,  
 And when he has skimmed it once, skim it again;  
 If at all they resemble him, you may be sure it is  
 Because their shoals mirror his mists and obscurities, 90  
 As a mud-puddle seems deep as heaven for a minute,  
 While a cloud that floats o’er is reflected within it.

“There comes —, for instance; to see him’s rare sport,  
 Tread in Emerson’s tracks with legs painfully short;  
 How he jumps, how he strains, and gets red in the face, 95  
 To keep step with the mystagogue’s natural pace!  
 He follows as close as a stick to a rocket,  
 His fingers exploring the prophet’s each pocket.  
 Fie, for shame, brother bard; with good fruit of your own,  
 Can’t you let Neighbor Emerson’s orchards alone? 100  
 Besides, ’tis no use, you’ll not find e’en a core,—  
 — has picked up all the windfalls before.  
 They might strip every tree, and E. never would catch ’em,  
 His Hesperides have no rude dragon to watch ’em;  
 When they send him a dishful, and ask him to try ’em, 105  
 He never suspects how the sly rogues came by ’em;  
 He wonders why ’tis there are none such his trees on,  
 And thinks ’em the best he has tasted this season. . . .

“There is Willis, all *natty* and jaunty and gay,  
 Who says his best things in so foppish a way, 110  
 With conceits and pet phrases so thickly o’erlying ’em,  
 That one hardly knows whether to thank him for saying ’em;

73. **Fuseli**—John Henry Fuseli (1741-1825), a German-Swiss painter living in England given to extravagant distortion of form and unusual combinations of color. 77. **Flaxman**—John Flaxman (1755-1826), English sculptor of the classical revival. 93. **There comes**—There seems little doubt that the blank should be filled in with Thoreau’s name. 102. **has picked**—There is some doubt as to who is meant, but Alcott and Channing have been suggested. 104. **Hesperides**—In Greek mythology maidens known as the Hesperides watched over a tree of golden apples and were in turn guarded by a dragon. 108. **season**—A description of Alcott is here omitted, as also one of O. O. Brownson. 109. **Willis**—Nathaniel Parker Willis (1806-1867), known to his friends as Nat or Natty, and one of the most characteristic writers of fashionable poetry and journalism in the forties.

Over-ornament ruins both poem and prose,  
 Just conceive of a Muse with a ring in her nose!  
 His prose had a natural grace of its own, 115  
 And enough of it, too, if he'd let it alone;  
 But he twitches and jerks so, one fairly gets tired,  
 And is forced to forgive where one might have admired;  
 Yet whenever it slips away free and unlaced,  
 It runs like a stream with a musical waste, 120  
 And gurgles along with the liquidest sweep;—  
 'Tis not deep as a river, but who'd have it deep?  
 In a country where scarcely a village is found  
 That has not its author sublime and profound,  
 For some one to be slightly shallow's a duty, 125  
 And Willis's shallowness makes half his beauty.  
 His prose winds along with a blithe, gurgling error,  
 And reflects all of Heaven it can see in its mirror:  
 'Tis a narrowish strip, but it is not an artifice;  
 'Tis the true out-of-doors with its genuine hearty phiz; 130  
 It is Nature herself, and there's something in that,  
 Since most brains reflect but the crown of a hat.  
 Few volumes I know to read under a tree,  
 More truly delightful than his *A l'Abri*,  
 With the shadows of leaves flowing over your book, 135  
 Like ripple-shades netting the bed of a brook;  
 With June coming softly your shoulder to look over,  
 Breezes waiting to turn every leaf of your book over,  
 And Nature to criticise still as you read,—  
 The page that bears that is a rare one indeed. 140

"He's so innate a cockney, that had he been born  
 Where plain bare-skin's the only full-dress that is worn,  
 He'd have given his own such an air that you'd say  
 'T had been made by a tailor to lounge in Broadway.  
 His nature's a glass of champagne with the foam on't, 145  
 As tender as Fletcher, as witty as Beaumont;  
 So his best things are done in the flush of the moment;  
 If he wait, all is spoiled; he may stir it and shake it,  
 But, the fixed air once gone, he can never remake it.  
 He might be a marvel of easy delightfulness, 150  
 If he would not sometimes leave the *r* out of sprightfulness;  
 And he ought to let Scripture alone—'tis self-slaughter,  
 For nobody likes inspiration-and-water.  
 He'd have been just the fellow to sup at the Mermaid,  
 Cracking jokes at rare Ben, with an eye to the barmaid, 155  
 His wit running up as Canary ran down,—  
 The topmost bright bubble on the wave of The Town. . . .

134. *A l'Abri*.—*Al' Abri*; or, *The Tent Pitch'd*, a book by Willis published in 1839. 141. cockney—city-dweller. 146. Fletcher . . . Beaumont—Francis Beaumont (1586-1615), and John Fletcher (1579-1625), the celebrated collaborators in drama. 152. Scripture—Willis wrote a number of "elegant" poetical paraphrases of Bible stories, of which "Absalom" is characteristic. 154. Mermaid—the tavern celebrated in Keats's famous poem, "Lines on the Mermaid Tavern." 155. rare Ben—Ben Jonson (1574-1637), English dramatist, whose epitaph is "O rare Ben Jonson." 156. Canary—Canary wine, which convention associates with the Mermaid tavern.

"There is Bryant, as quiet, as cool, and as dignified,  
 As a smooth, silent iceberg, that never is ignifed,  
 Save when by reflection 'tis kindled o' nights 160  
 With a semblance of flame by the chill Northern Lights.  
 He may rank (Griswold says so) first bard of your nation,  
 (There's no doubt that he stands in supreme icelation),  
 Your topmost Parnassus he may set his heel on,  
 But no warm applauses come, peal following peal on,— 165  
 He's too smooth and too polished to hang any zeal on:  
 Unqualified merits, I'll grant, if you choose, he has 'em,  
 But he lacks the one merit of kindling enthusiasm;  
 If he stir you at all, it is just, on my soul,  
 Like being stirred up with the very North Pole. 170

"He is very nice reading in summer, but *inter*  
*Nos*, we don't want *extra* freezing in winter;  
 Take him up in the depth of July, my advice is,  
 When you feel an Egyptian devotion to ices,  
 But, deduct all you can, there's enough that's right good in him, 175  
 He has a true soul for field, river, and wood in him;  
 And his heart, in the midst of brick walls, or where'er it is,  
 Glows, softens, and thrills with the tenderest charities—  
 To you mortals that delve in this trade-ridden planet?  
 No, to old Berkshire's hills, with their limestone and granite. 180  
 If you're one who *in loco* (add *foco* here) *desipis*,  
 You will get of his outermost heart (as I guess) a piece;  
 But you'd get deeper down if you came as a precipice,  
 And would break the last seal of its inwardest fountain,  
 If you only could palm yourself off for a mountain. 185  
 Mr. Quivis, or somebody quite as discerning,  
 Some scholar who's hourly expecting his learning,  
 Calls B. the American Wordsworth; but Wordsworth  
 May be rated at more than your whole tuneful herd's worth.  
 No, don't be absurd, he's an excellent Bryant; 190  
 But, my friends, you'll endanger the life of your client,  
 By attempting to stretch him up into a giant:  
 If you choose to compare him, I think there are two per-  
 sons fit for a parallel—Thompson and Cowper;

162. *Griswold*—Rufus Wilmot Griswold (1815-1857), who leads the poets up to Apollo; noted as an anthologist and editor. 164. *Parnassus*—a mountain in Greece sacred to the muses and Apollo. 171-172. *inter Nos*—among ourselves. 174. *ices*—a pun on Isis, the chief goddess of the ancient Egyptians. 180. *Berkshire's hills*—The Berkshire hills are in Massachusetts and Connecticut. 181. *in . . . desipis*—The play on words is somewhat complicated. The original Latin phrase is *in loco desipis*—you can be foolish in a particular place. *In foco* adds the meaning: at one's own fireside, but the Locofoco party is the occasion of the jingle. The Locofocos, or radical wing of the Democratic party, held a convention in Tammany Hall, New York City, in 1842, and, when the lights were put out, continued their convention by the aid of the newly invented locofoco matches. 186. *Quivis*—Anybody. 190. *he*—refers to Bryant. 194. *Thompson and Cowper*—James Thomson—though Lowell has Thompson—(1700-1748), author of *The Seasons*; William Cowper (1731-1800), author of *The Task*. Lowell appends the following rhymed note:

To demonstrate quickly and easily how per-  
 versely absurd 'tis to sound this name *Cowper*,  
 As people in general call him named *super*,  
 I remark that he rhymes it himself with horse-trooper.—

I don't mean exactly,—there's something of each, 195  
 There's T.'s love of nature, C.'s penchant to preach;  
 Just mix up their minds so that C.'s spice of craziness  
 Shall balance and neutralize T.'s turn for laziness,  
 And it gives you a brain cool, quite frictionless, quiet,  
 Whose internal police nips the buds of all riot,— 200  
 A brain like a permanent strait-jacket put on  
 The heart which strives vainly to burst off a button,—  
 A brain which, without being slow or mechanic,  
 Does more than a larger less drilled, more volcanic;  
 He's a Cowper condensed, with no craziness bitten, 205  
 And the advantage that Wordsworth before him had written.

"But, my dear little bardlings, don't prick up your ears  
 Nor suppose I would rank you and Bryant as peers;  
 If I call him an iceberg, I don't mean to say  
 There is nothing in that which is grand in its way; 210  
 He is almost the one of your poets that knows  
 How much grace, strength, and dignity lie in Repose;  
 If he sometimes fall short, he is too wise to mar  
 His thought's modest fulness by going too far;  
 'Twould be well if your authors should all make a trial 215  
 Of what virtue there is in severe self-denial,  
 And measure their writings by Hesiod's staff,  
 Which teaches that all has less value than half.

"There is Whittier, whose swelling and vehement heart  
 Strains the strait-breasted drab of the Quaker apart, 220  
 And reveals the live Man, still supreme and erect,  
 Underneath the bemummifying wrappers of sect;  
 There was ne'er a man born who had more of the swing  
 Of the true lyric bard and all that kind of thing;  
 And his failures arise (though he seems not to know it) 225  
 From the very same cause that has made him a poet,—  
 A fervor of mind which knows no separation  
 'Twixt simple excitement and pure inspiration,  
 As my Pythoness erst sometimes erred from not knowing  
 If 'twere I or mere wind through her tripod was blowing; 230  
 Let his mind once get head in its favorite direction  
 And the torrent of verse bursts the dams of reflection,  
 While, borne with the rush of the metre along,  
 The poet may chance to go right or go wrong,  
 Content with the whirl and delirium of song; 235  
 Then his grammar's not always correct, nor his rhymes,  
 And he's prone to repeat his own lyrics sometimes,  
 Not his best, though, for those are struck off at white-heats  
 When the heart in his breast like a trip-hammer beats,

197. **craziness**—Cowper suffered most of his life from fits of melancholia. 198. **laziness**—Thomson was by repute the laziest poet in English literature. 217. **Hesiod's**—(eighth century B.C.) the earliest Greek didactic poet. 229. **Pythoness**—the priestess who gave forth the oracles of Apollo at Delphi. 239. **trip-hammer**—a machine hammer, operated by a tripping device which raises and drops it.

And can ne'er be repeated again any more 240  
 Than they could have been carefully plotted before:  
 Like old what's-his-name there at the battle of Hastings  
 (Who, however, gave more than mere rhythmical bastings),  
 Our Quaker leads off metaphorical fights  
 For reform and whatever they call human rights, 245  
 Both singing and striking in front of the war,  
 And hitting his foes with the mallet of Thor;  
*Anne haec*, one exclaims, on beholding his knocks,  
*Vestis filii tui*, O, leather-clad Fox?  
 Can that be thy son, in the battle's mid din, 250  
 Preaching brotherly love and then driving it in  
 To the brain of the tough old Goliath of sin,  
 With the smoothest of pebbles from Castaly's spring,  
 Impressed on his hard moral sense with a sling?  
  
 "All honor and praise to the right-hearted bard 255  
 Who was true to The Voice when such service was hard,  
 Who himself was so free he dared sing for the slave  
 When to look but a protest in silence was brave;  
 All honor and praise to the women and men  
 Who spoke out for the dumb and the down-trodden then! 260  
 I need not to name them, already for each  
 I see History preparing the statue and niche;  
 They were harsh, but shall *you* be so shocked at hard words  
 Who have beaten your pruning-hooks up into swords,  
 Whose rewards and hurrahs men are surer to gain 265  
 By the reaping of men and of women than grain?  
 Why should *you* stand aghast at their fierce wordy war, if  
 You scalp one another for Bank or for Tariff?  
 Your calling them cut-throats and knaves all day long  
 Don't prove that the use of hard language is wrong; 270  
 While the World's heart beats quicker to think of such men  
 As signed Tyranny's doom with a bloody steel-pen,  
 While on Fourth-of-Julys beardless orators fright one  
 With hints at Harmodius and Aristogeiton,  
 You need not look shy at your sisters and brothers 275  
 Who stab with sharp words for the freedom of others;—  
 No, a wreath, twine a wreath for the loyal and true  
 Who, for sake of the many, dared stand with the few,

242. *what's-his-name*—Taillefer, a Norman minstrel, who rode into battle at Hastings singing of Roland. 247. *mallet of Thor*—Mjölnir, the magic hammer of the Norse war god, which returned to his hand after he had thrown it. 248-249. *Anne . . . tui*—Is this indeed the dress of thy son? Gen. 37: 32, in the Latin version. 249. *leather-clad Fox*—George Fox (1624-1691), the founder of the Quakers, traditionally supposed to have worn leather breeches. 252. *Goliath*—Cf. I Sam. 17. 253. *Castaly's spring*—Castalia was a spring on Mount Parnassus sacred to Apollo and the Muses. 264. *pruning-hooks . . . swords*—Cf. Joel 3: 10. 268. *Bank . . . Tariff*—The question of the constitutionality of the United States Bank agitated the country throughout the first part of the nineteenth century. The tariff question was one of the sore points between the industrial North and the cotton-growing South. 274. *Harmodius . . . Aristogeiton*—classic examples of tyrannicides, who killed Hipparchus, tyrant of Athens, in the sixth century B.C., and were themselves slain.

Not of blood-spattered laurel for enemies braved,  
But of broad, peaceful oak-leaves for citizens saved! . . . 280

"There is Hawthorne, with genius so shrinking and rare  
That you hardly at first see the strength that is there;  
A frame so robust, with a nature so sweet,  
So earnest, so graceful, so solid, so fleet,  
Is worth a descent from Olympus to meet; 285  
'Tis as if a rough oak that for ages had stood,  
With his gnarled bony branches like ribs of the wood,  
Should bloom, after cycles of struggle and scathe,  
With a single anemone trembly and rathe;  
His strength is so tender, his wildness so meek, 290  
That a suitable parallel sets one to seek,—  
He's a John Bunyan Fouqué, a Puritan Tieck;  
When Nature was shaping him, clay was not granted  
For making so full-sized a man as she wanted,  
So, to fill out her model, a little she spared 295  
From some finer-grained stuff for a woman prepared,  
And she could not have hit a more excellent plan  
For making him fully and perfectly man.  
The success of her scheme gave her so much delight,  
That she tried it again, shortly after, in Dwight; 300  
Only, while she was kneading and shaping the clay,  
She sang to her work in her sweet childish way,  
And found, when she'd put the last touch to his soul,  
That the music had somehow got mixed with the whole.

"Here's Cooper, who's written six volumes to show 305  
He's as good as a lord: well, let's grant that he's so;  
If a person prefer that description of praise,  
Why, a coronet's certainly cheaper than bays;  
But he need take no pains to convince us he's not  
(As his enemies say) the American Scott. 310  
Choose any twelve men, and let C. read aloud  
That one of his novels of which he's most proud,  
And I'd lay any bet that, without ever quitting  
Their box, they'd be all, to a man, for acquitting.  
He has drawn you one character, though, that is new, 315  
One wildflower he's plucked that is wet with the dew  
Of this fresh Western world, and, the thing not to mince,  
He has done naught but copy it ill ever since;  
His Indians, with proper respect be it said,  
Are just Natty Bumppo daubed over with red, 320  
And his very Long Toms are the same useful Nat,  
Rigged up in duck pants and a sou'-wester hat,

279-280. laurel . . . oak-leaves—The antithesis is between the laurel crown given victors in classical times, and the wreath of oak leaves intended to commemorate civic virtue. 289. rathe—early. 292. John . . . Tieck—John Bunyan (1628-1688), the author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*; Baron de la Motte Fouqué (1777-1843), German romanticist, author of the fantastic romance *Undine*; Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853), one of the principal leaders in the first German romantic school. 300. Dwight—John Sullivan Dwight (1813-1893), Boston writer on music. 308. bays—which crown a poet. 321. Long Toms—Long Tom Coffin, the type of American sailor in *The Pilot* (1823).

(Though once in a Coffin, a good chance was found  
 To have slipt the old fellow away underground).  
 All his other men-figures are clothes upon sticks, 325  
 The *dernière chemise* of a man in a fix,  
 (As a captain besieged, when his garrison's small,  
 Sets up caps upon poles to be seen o'er the wall);  
 And the women he draws from one model don't vary,  
 All sappy as maples and flat as a prairie. 330  
 When a character's wanted, he goes to the task  
 As a cooper would do in composing a cask;  
 He picks out the staves, of their qualities heedful,  
 Just hoops them together as tight as is needful,  
 And, if the best fortune should crown the attempt, he 335  
 Has made at the most something wooden and empty.

"Don't suppose I would underrate Cooper's abilities;  
 If I thought you'd do that, I should feel very ill at ease;  
 The men who have given to *one* character life  
 And objective existence are not very rife; 340  
 You may number them all, both prose-writers and singers,  
 Without overrunning the bounds of your fingers,  
 And Natty won't go to oblivion quicker  
 Than Adams the parson or Primrose the vicar.

"There is one thing in Cooper I like, too, and that is 345  
 That on manners he lectures his countrymen gratis,  
 Not precisely so either, because, for a rarity,  
 He is paid for his tickets in unpopularity.  
 Now he may overcharge his American pictures,  
 But you'll grant there's a good deal of truth in his strictures; 350  
 And I honor the man who is willing to sink  
 Half his present repute for the freedom to think,  
 And, when he has thought, be his cause strong or weak,  
 Will risk t'other half for the freedom to speak,  
 Caring naught for what vengeance the mob has in store, 355  
 Let that mob be the upper ten thousand or lower.

"There are truths you Americans need to be told,  
 And it never'll refute them to swagger and scold;  
 John Bull, looking o'er the Atlantic, in choler  
 At your aptness for trade, says you worship the dollar; 360  
 But to scorn such eye-dollar-try's what very few do,  
 And John goes to that church as often as you do.  
 No matter what John says, don't try to outcrow him,  
 'Tis enough to go quietly on and outgrow him;  
 Like most fathers, Bull hates to see Number One 365  
 Displacing himself in the mind of his son,  
 And detests the same faults in himself he'd neglected  
 When he sees them again in his child's glass reflected;

326. *dernière chemise*—last shirt. 344. Adams . . . Primrose—Parson Adams, one of the principal characters in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*; Mr. Primrose, the leading character in Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield*. 361. *eye-dollar-try's*—The pun is on "idolatry."



To love one another you're too like by half.  
 If he is a bull, you're a pretty stout calf, 370  
 And tear your own pasture for naught but to show  
 What a nice pair of horns you're beginning to grow.

"There are one or two things I should just like to hint,  
 For you don't often get the truth told you in print;  
 The most of you (this is what strikes all beholders) 375  
 Have a mental and physical stoop in the shoulders;  
 Though you ought to be free as the winds and the waves,  
 You've the gait and the manners of run-away slaves;  
 Though you brag of your New World, you don't half believe in it,  
 And as much of the Old as is possible weave in it; 380  
 Your goddess of freedom, a tight, buxom girl,  
 With lips like a cherry and teeth like a pearl,  
 With eyes bold as Herë's, and hair floating free,  
 And full of the sun as the spray of the sea,  
 Who can sing at a husking or romp at a shearing, 385  
 Who can trip through the forests alone without fearing,  
 Who can drive home the cows with a song through the grass,  
 Keeps glancing aside into Europe's cracked glass,  
 Hides her red hands in gloves, pinches up her lithe waist,  
 And makes herself wretched with transmarine taste; 390  
 She loses her fresh country charm when she takes  
 Any mirror except her own rivers and lakes.

"You steal Englishmen's books and think Englishmen's thought,  
 With their salt on her tail your wild eagle is caught;  
 Your literature suits its each whisper and motion 395  
 To what will be thought of it over the ocean;  
 The cast clothes of Europe your statesmanship tries  
 And mumbles again the old blarneys and lies;—  
 Forget Europe wholly, your veins throb with blood,  
 To which the dull current in hers is but mud; 400  
 Let her sneer, let her say your experiment fails,  
 In her voice there's a tremble e'en now while she rails,  
 And your shore will soon be in the nature of things  
 Covered thick with gilt driftwood of castaway kings,  
 Where alone, as it were in a Longfellow's Waif 405  
 Her fugitive pieces will find themselves safe.  
 O my friends, thank your God, if you have one, that he  
 'Twixt the Old World and you set the gulf of a sea;  
 Be strong-backed, brown-handed, upright as your pines,  
 By the scale of a hemisphere shape your designs, 410  
 Be true to yourselves and this new nineteenth age,  
 As a statue by Powers, or a picture by Page,

383. Herë—Hera, the wife of Zeus. 393. steal—In the absence of an international copyright law when this poem was written, English books were reprinted in the United States without the payment of royalties to their authors. 405. Waif—The reference is to a poetical anthology by this title edited by Longfellow in 1845 [1844]. 412. Powers—Hiram Powers (1805-1873), American sculptor, famous for his statue of "The Greek Slave." 412. Page—William Page (1811-1885), American painter, to whom Lowell dedicated his first collection of *Poems*.

Plow, sail, forge, build, carve, paint, all things make new,  
 To your own New-World instincts contrive to be true,  
 Keep your ears open wide to the Future's first call, 415  
 Be whatever you will, but yourselves first of all,  
 Stand fronting the dawn on Toil's heaven-scaling peaks,  
 And become my new race of more practical Greeks.—  
 Hem! your likeness at present, I shudder to tell o't,  
 Is that you have your slaves, and the Greek had his helot." . . . 420

"There comes Poe, with his raven, like Barnaby Rudge,  
 Three-fifths of him genius and two-fifths sheer fudge,  
 Who talks like a book of iambs and pentameters,  
 In a way to make people of common sense damn metres, 425  
 Who has written some things quite the best of their kind,  
 But the heart somehow seems all squeezed out by the mind,  
 Who—But hey-day! What's this? Messieurs Mathews and Poe,  
 You mustn't fling mud-balls at Longfellow so,  
 Does it make a man worse that his character's such  
 As to make his friends love him (as you think) too much? 430  
 Why, there is not a bard at this moment alive  
 More willing than he that his fellows should thrive;  
 While you are abusing him thus, even now  
 He would help either one of you out of a slough;  
 You may say that he's smooth and all that till you're hoarse, 435  
 But remember that elegance also is force;  
 After polishing granite as much as you will,  
 The heart keeps its tough old persistency still;  
 Deduct all you can *that* still keeps you at bay;  
 Why, he'll live till men weary of Collins and Gray. 440  
 I'm not overfond of Greek metres in English,  
 To me rhyme's a gain, so it be not too jinglish,  
 And your modern hexameter verses are no more  
 Like Greek ones than sleek Mr. Pope is like Homer;  
 As the roar of the sea to the coo of a pigeon is, 445  
 So, compared to your moderns, sounds old Melesigenes;  
 I may be too partial, the reason, perhaps, o't is  
 That I've heard the old blind man recite his own rhapsodies,  
 And my ear with that music impregnate may be,  
 Like the poor exiled shell with the soul of the sea, 450  
 Or as one can't bear Strauss when his nature is cloven  
 To its deeps within deeps by the stroke of Beethoven;  
 But, set that aside, and 'tis truth that I speak,  
 Had Theocritus written in English, not Greek,

420. *helot*—a serf in classical Sparta. 421. *Barnaby Rudge*—The central figure of Dickens's novel *Barnaby Rudge* has a raven. 427. *Mathews*—Cornelius Mathews (1817-1889), editor and magazine writer. For a specimen of Poe's accusations against Longfellow see his article "Mr. Longfellow and Other Plagiarists." 440. *Collins and Gray*—William Collins (1721-1759), author of "Ode to Evening"; Thomas Gray (1716-1771), author of the famous "Elegy in a Country Churchyard." 441. *metres*—The hexameter line of *Evangeline* occasioned considerable debate among critics. 444. *Pope*—Pope's translation of the *Iliad* was characterized by Richard Bentley as "A very pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but not Homer." 446. *Melesigenes*—Melos-born, meaning Homer. 451. *Strauss*—Johann Strauss (1804-1849), famous for his waltzes. 452. *Beethoven*—Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827), one of the titans of music. 454. *Theocritus*—Theocritus, Greek poet of the third century B.C., who wrote pastoral poetry.

I believe that his exquisite sense would scarce change a line 455  
 In that rare, tender, virgin-like pastoral Evangeline.  
 That's not ancient nor modern, its place is apart  
 Where time has no sway, in the realm of pure Art,  
 'Tis a shrine of retreat from Earth's hubbub and strife  
 As quiet and chaste as the author's own life. . . . 460

"What! Irving? thrice welcome, warm heart and fine brain,  
 You bring back the happiest spirit from Spain,  
 And the gravest sweet humor, that ever were there  
 Since Cervantes met death in his gentle despair;  
 Nay, don't be embarrassed, nor look so beseeching, 465  
 I sha'n't run directly against my own preaching,  
 And, having just laughed at their Raphaels and Dantes,  
 Go to setting you up beside matchless Cervantes;  
 But allow me to speak what I honestly feel,—  
 To a true poet-heart add the fun of Dick Steele, 470  
 Throw in all of Addison, *minus* the chill,  
 With the whole of that partnership's stock and good-will,  
 Mix well, and while stirring, hum o'er, as a spell,  
 The fine *old* English Gentleman, simmer it well,  
 Sweeten just to your own private liking, then strain, 475  
 That only the finest and clearest remain,  
 Let it stand out of doors till a soul it receives  
 From the warm lazy sun loitering down through green leaves,  
 And you'll find a choice nature, not wholly deserving  
 A name either English or Yankee,—just Irving. . . . 480

Here, "Forgive me, Apollo," I cried, "while I pour  
 My heart out to my birthplace: O loved more and more,  
 Dear Baystate, from whose rocky bosoms thy sons  
 Should suck milk, strong-will-giving, brave, such as runs  
 In the veins of old Graylock—who is it that dares 485  
 Call thee pedler, a soul wrapped in bank-books and shares?  
 It is false! She's a Poet! I see, as I write,  
 Along the far railroad the steam-snake glide white,  
 The cataract-throb of her mill-hearts I hear,  
 The swift strokes of trip-hammers weary my ear, 490  
 Sledges ring upon anvils, through logs the saw screams,  
 Blocks swing to their place, beetles drive home the beams:—  
 It is songs such as these that she croons to the din  
 Of her fast-flying shuttles, year out and year in,  
 While from earth's farthest corner there comes not a breeze 495  
 But wafts her the buzz of her gold-gleaning bees:

462. Spain—Irving returned from his post as American minister to Spain in 1846. 464. Cervantes—(1547-1616) the author of *Don Quixote*. He died a Franciscan monk. 467. Raphaels—Raphael Sanzio (1483-1520), Italian painter. 467. Dantes—Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), author of the *Divine Comedy*. 470. Steele—Richard Steele (1672-1729) with Joseph Addison—line 471—(1672-1719), the author of *The Spectator*. 474. English Gentleman—The reference is to Irving's essay on this theme. 485. Graylock—a mountain in Massachusetts. 492. beetles—A beetle is an instrument or machine for driving down piles, stones, and so forth. 494. shuttles—The references are to the growth of the textile industry in Massachusetts.

What though those horn hands have as yet found small time  
 For painting and sculpture and music and rhyme?  
 These will come in due order; the need that pressed sorest  
 Was to vanquish the seasons, the ocean, the forest, 500  
 To bridle and harness the rivers, the steam,  
 Making those whirl her mill-wheels, this tug in her team,  
 To vassalize old tyrant Winter, and make  
 Him delve surlily for her on river and lake;—  
 When this New World was parted, she strove not to shirk 505  
 Her lot in the heirdom, the tough, silent Work,  
 The hero-share ever, from Herakles down  
 To Odin, the Earth's iron sceptre and crown:  
 Yes, thou dear, noble Mother! if ever men's praise  
 Could be claimed for creating heroical lays, 510  
 Thou hast won it; if ever the laurel divine  
 Crowned the Maker and Builder, that glory is thine!  
 Thy songs are right epic, they tell how this rude  
 Rock-rib of our earth here was tamed and subdued;  
 Thou hast written them plain on the face of the planet 515  
 In brave, deathless letters of iron and granite;  
 Thou hast printed them deep for all time; they are set  
 From the same runic type-fount and alphabet  
 With thy stout Berkshire hills and the arms of thy Bay,—  
 They are staves from the burly old Mayflower lay. 520  
 If the drones of the Old World, in querulous ease,  
 Ask thy Art and thy Letters, point proudly to these,  
 Or, if they deny these are Letters and Art,  
 Toil on with the same old invincible heart;  
 Thou art rearing the pedestal broad-based and grand 525  
 Whereon the fair shapes of the Artist shall stand,  
 And creating, through labors undaunted and long,  
 The theme for all Sculpture and Painting and Song!

“But my good mother Baystate wants no praise of mine,  
 She learned from *her* mother a precept divine 530  
 About something that butters no parsnips, her *forte*  
 In another direction lies, work is her sport  
 (Though she'll curtsy and set her cap straight, that she will,  
 If you talk about Plymouth and red Bunker's hill).  
 Dear, notable goodwife! by this time of night, 535  
 Her hearth is swept neatly, her fire burning bright,  
 And she sits in a chair (of home plan and make) rocking,  
 Musing much, all the while, as she darns on a stocking,  
 Whether turkeys will come pretty high next Thanksgiving,  
 Whether flour'll be so dear, for, as sure as she's living, 540  
 She will use rye-and-injun then, whether the pig  
 By this time ain't got pretty tolerable big,

497. horn—horny. 507. Herakles—Hercules, whose twelve labors form an important part of Greek mythology. 508. Odin—the father of the gods in Norse mythology. Lowell glances indirectly at Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-Worship* (1841) in this passage. 518. runic—here used in the sense of rude, original. 541. rye-and-injun—rye flour and cornmeal, mixed, as a cheap substitute for wheat flour.

And whether to sell it outright will be best,  
 Or to smoke hams and shoulders and salt down the rest,—  
 At this minute she'd swop all my verses, ah, cruel!  
 545 For the last patent stove that is saving of fuel;  
 So I'll just let Apollo go on, for his phiz  
 Shows I've kept him awaiting too long as it is." . . .

"There's Holmes, who is matchless among you for wit;  
 A Leyden-jar always full-charged, from which flit  
 550 The electrical tingles of hit after hit;  
 In long poems 'tis painful sometimes, and invites  
 A thought of the way the new Telegraph writes,  
 Which pricks down its little sharp sentences spitefully  
 As if you got more than you'd title to rightfully,  
 555 And you find yourself hoping its wild father Lightning  
 Would flame in for a second and give you a fright'ning.  
 He has perfect sway of what I call a sham metre,  
 But many admire it, the English pentameter,  
 And Campbell, I think, wrote most commonly worse,  
 560 With less nerve, swing, and fire in the same kind of verse,  
 Nor e'er achieved aught in't so worthy of praise  
 As the tribute of Holmes to the grand *Marseillaise*.  
 You went crazy last year over Bulwer's New Timon;—  
 Why, if B. to the day of his dying, should rhyme on,  
 565 Heaping verses on verses and tomes upon tomes,  
 He could ne'er reach the best point and vigor of Holmes.  
 His are just the fine hands, too, to weave you a lyric  
 Full of fancy, fun, feeling, or spiced with satiric  
 In a measure so kindly, you doubt if the toes  
 570 That are trodden upon are your own or your foes'.

"There is Lowell, who's striving Parnassus to climb  
 With a whole bale of *isms* tied together with rhyme,  
 He might get on alone, spite of brambles and boulders,  
 But he can't with that bundle he has on his shoulders,  
 575 The top of the hill he will ne'er come nigh reaching  
 Till he learns the distinction 'twixt singing and preaching;  
 His lyre has some chords that would ring pretty well,  
 But he'd rather by half make a drum of the shell,  
 And rattle away till he's old as Methusalem,  
 580 At the head of a march to the last new Jerusalem." . . .

550. *Leyden-jar*—a glass jar which condenses electricity and is capable of giving out strong shocks. 553. *new Telegraph*—The Morse code (dot-dash system) was just replacing the older recording systems in the telegraph world. 560. *Campbell*—Thomas Campbell (1777-1844), British poet. 563. *tribute*—The reference is to a passage in sec. II of *Poetry: A Metrical Essay*, Holmes's Phi Beta Kappa poem of 1836. 564. *Bulwer's . . . Timon*—Bulwer-Lytton's *The New Timon*, a satirical poem, appeared in 1846. 580. *Methusalem*—*Cf.* Gen. 5: 27.

## THE BIGLOW PAPERS

## SECOND SERIES

## THE COURTIN'

As before indicated, the first version of this poem originally appeared among the "Notices of an Independent Press" in the first series of *The Biglow Papers*. According to Lowell's story, he originally wrote the version in question to fill in a blank page in the book. Readers commenced to demand the rest of the poem, and in a later edition of *The Biglow Papers, First Series*, he added more stanzas. The full and final version of the poem seems to have been prepared originally as an "autograph" for the Baltimore Sanitary Commission Fair, and was first published at the end of the Introduction to the second series of *The Biglow Papers*.

God makes sech nights, all white an' still  
 Fur'z you can look or listen,  
 Moonshine an' snow on field an' hill,  
 All silence an' all glisten.

Zekle crep' up quite unbeknown 5  
 An' peeked in thru' the winder,  
 An' there sot Huld' all alone,  
 'ith no one nigh to hender.

A fireplace filled the room's one side 10  
 With half a cord o' wood in—  
 There warn't no stoves (tell comfort died)  
 To bake ye to a puddin'.

The wa'nut logs shot sparkles out  
 Towards the pootiest, bless her,  
 An' leetle flames danced all about 15  
 The chiny on the dresser.

Agin the chimbley crook-necks hung,  
 An' in amongst 'em rusted  
 The ole queen's-arm thet gran'ther Young  
 Fetched back f'om Concord busted. 20

The very room, coz she was in,  
 Seemed warm f'om floor to ceilin',  
 An' she looked full ez rosy agin  
 Ez the apples she was peelin'.

'Twas kin' o' kingdom-come to look 25  
 On sech a blessed cretur,  
 A dogrose blushin' to a brook  
 Ain't modester nor sweeter.

## JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

He was six foot o' man, A 1,  
 Clear grit an' human natur' 20  
 None couldn't quicker pitch a ton  
 Nor dror a furrer straighter.

He'd sparked it with full twenty gals,  
 Hed squired 'em, danced 'em, druv 'em,  
 Fust this one, an' then thet, by spells— 35  
 All is, he couldn't love 'em.

But long o' her his veins 'ould run  
 All crinkly like curled maple,  
 The side she breshed felt full o' sun  
 Ez a south slope in Ap'il. 40

She thought no v'ice hed sech a swing  
 Ez hisn in the choir;  
 My! when he made Ole Hunderd ring,  
 She *knowed* the Lord was nigher.

An' she'd blush scarlit, right in prayer, 45  
 When her new meetin'-bunnet  
 Felt somehow thru' its crown a pair  
 O' blue eyes sot upun it.

Thet night, I tell ye, she looked *some!*  
 She seemed to 've gut a new soul, 50  
 For she felt sartin-sure he'd come,  
 Down to her very shoe-sole.

She heered a foot, an' knowed it tu,  
 A-raspin' on the scraper,—  
 All ways to once her feelins flew 55  
 Like sparks in burnt-up paper.

He kin' o' l'itered on the mat,  
 Some doubtfe o' the sekle,  
 His heart kep' goin' pity-pat,  
 But hern went pity Zekle. 60

An' yit she gin her cheer a jerk  
 Ez though she wished him furrer,  
 An' on her apples kep' to work,  
 Parin' away like murder.

"You want to see my Pa, I s'pose?" 65  
 "Wal . . . no . . . I come dasignin'"—  
 "To see my Ma? She's sprinklin' clo'es  
 Agin to-morrer's i'nin'."

31. a ton—of hay. 43. Ole Hunderd—Old Hundred: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," so called because it was once sung in connection with Ps. 100.

To say why gals acts so or so,  
 Or don't, 'ould be persumin';  
 Mebby to mean *yes* an' say *no*  
 Comes nateral to women. 70

He stood a spell on one foot fust,  
 Then stood a spell on t'other,  
 An' on which one he felt the wust 75  
 He couldn't ha' told ye nuther.

Says he, "I'd better call agin;"  
 Says she, "Think likely, Mister:"  
 Thet last word pricked him like a pin,  
 An' . . . Wal, he up an' kist her. 80

When Ma bimeby upon 'em slips,  
 Huldy sot pale ez ashes,  
 All kin' o' smily roun' the lips  
 An' teary roun' the lashes.

For she was jes' the quiet kind 85  
 Whose natures never vary,  
 Like streams that keep a summer mind  
 Snowhid in Jenooary.

The blood clost roun' her heart felt glued  
 Too tight for all expressin', 90  
 Tell mother see how metters stood,  
 An' gin 'em both her blessin'.

Then her red come back like the tide  
 Down to the Bay o' Fundy,  
 An' all I know is they was cried 95  
 In meetin' come nex' Sunday.

## NO. VI.

## SUNTHIN' IN THE PASTORAL LINE

This poem was first printed in the *Atlantic Monthly*, June, 1862, and then in the second series of *The Biglow Papers*. A prose introduction by the learned Parson Wilbur is here omitted.

Once git a smell o' musk into a draw,  
 An' it clings hold like precerents in law:  
 Your gra'ma'am put it there,—when, goodness knows,—  
 To jes' this-worldify her Sunday-clo'es;  
 But the old chist wun't sarve her gran'son's wife 5  
 (For, 'thout new funnitoo, wut good in life?),

93-94. tide . . . Fundy—A huge tide sweeps the Bay of Fundy. 95. cried—the banns were cried. i. draw—drawer.



An' so ole clawfoot, from the precinks dread  
 O' the spare chamber, slinks into the shed,  
 Where, dim with dust, it fust or last subsides  
 To holdin' seeds an' fifty things besides; 10  
 But better days stick fast in heart an' husk,  
 An' all you keep in't gits a scent o' musk.

Jes' so with poets: wut they've airly read  
 Gits kind o' worked into their heart an' head,  
 So's 't they can't seem to write but jest on sheers 15  
 With furrin countries or played-out ideers,  
 Nor hev a feelin', ef it doosn't smack  
 O' wut some critter chose to feel 'way back:  
 This makes 'em talk o' daisies, larks, an' things,  
 Ez though we'd nothin' here that blows an' sings 20  
 (Why, I'd give more for one live bobolink  
 Than a square mile o' larks in printer's ink),—  
 This makes 'em think our fust o' May is May,  
 Which 'tain't, for all the almanicks can say.

O little city-gals, don't never go it 25  
 Blind on the word o' noospaper or poet!  
 They're apt to puff, an' May-day seldom looks  
 Up in the country ez 't doos in books;  
 They're no more like than hornets'-nests an' hives,  
 Or printed sarmons be to holy lives. 30  
 I with my trousers perched on cowhide boots,  
 Tuggin' my foundered feet out by the roots,  
 Hev seen ye come to fling on April's hearse  
 Your muslin nosegays from the milliner's,  
 Puzzlin' to find dry ground your queen to choose, 35  
 An' dance your throats sore in morocker shoes:  
 I've seen ye an' felt proud, thet, come wut would,  
 Our Pilgrim stock wuz pethed with hardihood.  
 Pleasure doos make us Yankees kind o' winch,  
 Ez though 'twuz sunthin' paid for by the inch; 40  
 But yit we du contrive to worry thru,  
 Ef Dooty tells us thet the thing's to du,  
 An' kerry a hollerday, ef we set out,  
 Ez stiddily ez though 'twuz a redoubt.

I, country-born an' bred, know where to find 45  
 Some blooms thet make the season suit the mind,  
 An' seem to metch the doubtin' bluebird's notes,—  
 Half-vent'rin' liverworts in furry coats,  
 Bloodroots, whose rolled-up leaves ef you oncurl,  
 Each on 'em's cradle to a baby-pearl,— 50  
 But these are jes' Spring's pickets; sure ez sin,  
 The rebble frosts'll try to drive 'em in;  
 For half our May's so awfully like Mayn't,  
 'twould rile a Shaker or an evrige saint;

38. *pethed*—pithed, given force and strength. 39. *winch*—wince. 54. *Shaker*—a follower of Ann Lee, who taught the immediacy of the second coming of Christ.

Though I own up I like our back'ard springs 55  
 Thet kind o' haggie with their greens an' things,  
 An' when you 'most give up, 'thout more words  
 Toss the fields full o' blossoms, leaves, an' birds:  
 Thet's Northun natur', slow an' apt to doubt,  
 But when it *does* git stirred, ther''s no gin-out! 60

Fust come the blackbirds clatt'rin' in tall trees,  
 An' settlin' things in windy Congresses,—  
 Queer politicians, though, for I'll be skinned  
 Ef all on 'em don't head against the wind.  
 'fore long the trees begin to show belief,— 65  
 The maple crimsons to a coral-reef,  
 Then saffern swarms swing off from all the willers  
 So plump they look like yaller caterpillars,  
 Then gray hossches'nuts leetle hands unfold  
 Softer'n a baby's be at three days old: 70  
 Thet's robin-redbreast's almanick; he knows  
 Thet arter this ther' 's only blossom-snows;  
 So, choosin' out a handy crotch an' spouse,  
 He goes to plast'rin' his adobë house.

Then seems to come a hitch,—things lag behind, 75  
 Till some fine mornin' Spring makes up her mind,  
 An' ez, when snow-swelled rivers cresh their dams  
 Heaped-up with ice thet dovetails in an' jams,  
 A leak comes spirtin' thru some pin-hole cleft,  
 Grows stronger, fercer, tears out right an' left, 80  
 Then all the waters bow themselves an' come,  
 Suddin, in one gret slope o' shedderin' foam,  
 Jes' so our Spring gits everythin' in tune  
 An' gives one leap from Aperl into June:  
 Then all comes crowdin' in; afore you think, 85  
 Young oak-leaves mist the side-hill woods with pink;  
 The catbird in the laylock-bush is loud;  
 The orchards turn to heaps o' rosy cloud;  
 Red-cedars blossom tu, though few folks know it,  
 An' look all dipt in sunshine like a poet; 90  
 The lime-trees pile their solid stacks o' shade  
 An' drows'ly simmer with the bees' sweet trade;  
 In ellum-shrouds the flashin' hangbird clings  
 An' for the summer vy'ge his hammock slings;  
 All down the loose-walled lanes in archin' bowers 95  
 The barb'ry droops its strings o' golden flowers,  
 Whose shrinkin' hearts the school-gals love to try  
 With pins,—they'll worry yourn so, boys, bimeby!  
 But I don't love your cat'logue style,—do you?—  
 Ez ef to sell off Natur' by vendoo; 100  
 One word with blood in't 's twice ez good ez two:

'nuff sed, June's bridesman, poet o' the year,  
 Gladness on wings, the bobolink, is here;  
 Half-hid in tip-top apple-blooms he swings,  
 Or climbs against the breeze with quiverin' wings, 105  
 Or, givin' way to't in a mock despair,  
 Runs down, a brook o' laughter, thru the air.

I ollus feel the sap start in my veins  
 In Spring, with curus heats an' prickly pains,  
 Thet drive me, when I git a chance, to walk 110  
 Off by myself to hev a privit talk  
 With a queer critter thet can't seem to 'gree  
 Along o' me like most folks,—Mister Me.  
 Ther' 's times when I'm unsoshle ez a stone,  
 An' sort o' suffercate to be alone,— 115  
 I'm crowded jes' to think thet folks are nigh,  
 An' can't bear nothin' closer than the sky;  
 Now the wind's full ez shifty in the mind  
 Ez wut it is ou'-doors, ef I ain't blind,  
 An' sometimes, in the fairest sou'west weather, 120  
 My innard vane points east for weeks together,  
 My natur' gits all goose-flesh, an' my sins  
 Come drizzlin' on my conscience sharp ez pins:  
 Wal, et sech times I jes' slip out o' sight  
 An' take it out in a fair stan'-up fight 125  
 With the one cuss I can't lay on the shelf,  
 The crook'dest stick in all the heap,—Myself.

'Twuz so las' Sabbath arter meetin'-time:  
 Findin' my feelin's wouldn't noways rhyme  
 With nobody's, but off the hendle flew 130  
 An' took things from an east-wind pint o' view,  
 I started off to lose me in the hills  
 Where the pines be, up back o' 'Siah's Mills:  
 Pines, ef you're blue, are the best friends I know,  
 They mope an' sigh an' sheer your feelin's so,— 135  
 They hesh the ground beneath so, tu, I swan,  
 You half-forgit you've gut a body on.  
 Ther' 's a small school'us' there where four roads meet  
 The door-steps hollered out by little feet,  
 An' side-posts carved with names whose owners grew 140  
 To gret men, some on 'em, an' deacons, tu;  
 'taint used no longer, coz the town hez gut  
 A high-school, where they teach the Lord knows wut:  
 Three-story larnin' 's pop'lar now; I guess  
 We thriv' ez wal on jes' two stories less, 145  
 For it strikes me ther' 's sech a thing ez sinnin'  
 By overloadin' children's underpinnin':  
 Wal, here it wuz I larned my A B C,  
 An' it's a kind o' favorite spot with me.

We're curus critters: Now ain't jes' the minute 150  
 Thet ever fits us easy while we're in it;  
 Long ez 'twuz futur', 'twould be perfect bliss,—  
 Soon ez it's past, *thet* time's wuth ten o' this;  
 An' yet there ain't a man thet need be told  
 Thet Now's the only bird lays eggs o' gold. 155  
 A knee-high lad, I used to plot an' plan  
 An' think 'twuz life's cap-sheaf to be a man;  
 Now, gittin' gray, there's nothin' I enjoy  
 Like dreamin' back along into a boy:  
 So the ole school'us' is a place I choose 16c  
 Afore all others, ef I want to muse;  
 I set down where I used to set, an' git  
 My boyhood back, an' better things with it,—  
 Faith, Hope, an' sunthin', ef it isn't Cherrity,  
 It's want o' guile, an' thet's ez gret a rerrity, 165  
 While Fancy's cushin', free to Prince and Clown,  
 Makes the hard bench ez soft ez milk-weed-down.

Now, 'fore I knowed, thet Sabbath arternoon  
 When I sot out to tramp myself in tune,  
 I found me in the school'us' on my seat, 170  
 Drummin' the march to No-wheres with my feet.  
 Thinkin' o' nothin', I've heerd ole folks say  
 Is a hard kind o' dooty in its way:  
 It's thinkin' everythin' you ever knew,  
 Or ever hearn, to make your feelin's blue. 175  
 I sot there tryin' thet on for a spell:  
 I thought o' the Rebellion, then o' Hell,  
 Which some folks tell ye now is jest a metterfor  
 (A the'ry, p'raps, it wun't *feel* none the better for);  
 I thought o' Reconstruction, wut we'd win 180  
 Patchin' our patent self-blow-up agin:  
 I thought ef this 'ere milkin' o' the wits,  
 So much a month, warn't givin' Natur' fits,—  
 Ef folks warn't druv, findin' their own milk fail,  
 To work the cow thet hez an iron tail, 185  
 An' ef idees 'thout ripenin' in the pan  
 Would send up cream to humor ary man:  
 From this to thet I let my worryin' creep,  
 Till finally I must ha' fell asleep.

Our lives in sleep are some like streams thet glide 190  
 'twixt flesh an' sperrit boundin' on each side,  
 Where both shores' shadders kind o' mix an' mingle  
 In sunthin' thet ain't jes' like either single;  
 An' when you cast off moorin's from To-day,  
 An' down towards To-morrer drift away, 195  
 The imiges thet tengle on the stream  
 Make a new upside-down'ard world o' dream:

Sometimes they seem like sunrise-streaks an' warnin's  
 O' wut'll be in Heaven on Sabbath-mornin's,  
 An', mixed right in ez ef jest out o' spite, 200  
 Sunthin' thet says your supper ain't gone right.  
 I'm gret on dreams, an' often when I wake,  
 I've lived so much it makes my mem'ry ache,  
 An' can't skurce take a cat-nap in my cheer  
 'thout hevin' 'em, some good, some bad, all queer. 205

Now I wuz settin' where I'd ben, it seemed,  
 An' ain't sure yit whether I r'ally dreamed,  
 Nor, ef I did, how long I might ha' slep',  
 When I hearn some un stompin' up the step,  
 An' lookin' round, ef two an' two make four, 210  
 I see a Pilgrim Father in the door.  
 He wore a steeple-hat, tall boots, an' spurs  
 With rowels to 'em big ez ches'nut-burrs,  
 An' his gret sword behind him sloped away  
 Long'z a man's speech thet dunno wut to say.— 215  
 "Ef your name's Biglow, an' your given-name  
 Hosee," sez he, "it's arter you I came;  
 I'm your gret-gran'ther multiplied by three."—  
 "My *wut*?" sez I.—"Your gret-gret-gret," sez he:  
 "You wouldn't ha' never ben here but for me. 220  
 Two hundred an' three year ago this May  
 The ship I come in sailed up Boston Bay;  
 I'd been a cunnle in our Civil War,—  
 But wut on airth hev *you* gut up one for?  
 Coz we du things in England, 'tain't for you 225  
 To git a notion you can du 'em tu:  
 I'm told you write in public prints: ef true,  
 It's nateral you should know a thing or two."—  
 "Thet air's an argymunt I can't endorse,—  
 'twould prove, coz you wear spurs, you kep' a horse: 230  
 For brains," sez I, "wutever you may think,  
 Ain't boun' to cash the draf's o' pen-an'-ink,—  
 Though mos' folks write ez ef they hoped jes' quickenin'  
 The churn would argoo skim-milk into thickenin';  
 But skim-milk ain't a thing to change its view 235  
 O' wut it's meant for more'n a smoky flue.  
 But du pray tell me, 'fore we furdur go,  
 How in all Natur' did you come to know  
 'bout our affairs," sez I, "in Kingdom-Come?"—  
 "Wal, I worked round at sperrit-rappin' some, 240  
 An' danced the tables till their legs wuz gone,  
 In hopes o' larnin' wut wuz goin' on,"  
 Sez he, "but mejums lie so like all-split  
 Thet I concluded it wuz best to quit.  
 But, come now, ef you wun't confess to knowin', 245  
 You've some conjectures how the thing's a-goin'."—  
 "Gran'ther," sez I, "a vane warn't never known  
 Nor asked to hev a jedgment of its own;

An' yit, ef 'tain't gut rusty in the jints,  
 It's safe to trust its say on certin pints: 250  
 It knows the wind's opinions to a T,  
 An' the wind settles wut the weather'll be."  
 "I never thought a scion of our stock  
 Could grow the wood to make a weather-cock;  
 When I wuz younger'n you, skurce more'n a shaver, 255  
 No airthly wind," sez he, "could make me waver!"  
 (Ez he said this, he clinched his jaw an' forehead,  
 Hitchin' his belt to bring his sword-hilt forrard.)—  
 "Jes so it wuz with me," sez I, "I swow,  
 When I wuz younger'n wut you see me now,— 260  
 Nothin' from Adam's fall to Huldys bonnet,  
 Thet I warn't full-cocked with my jedgment on it;  
 But now I'm gittin' on in life, I find  
 It's a sight harder to make up my mind,—  
 Nor I don't often try tu, when events 265  
 Will du it for me free of all expense.  
 The moral question's ollus plain enough,—  
 It's jes' the human-natur' side thet's tough;  
 Wut's best to think mayn't puzzle me nor you,—  
 The pinch comes in decidin' wut to *du*; 270  
 Ef you *read* History, all runs smooth ez grease,  
 Coz there the men ain't nothin' more'n idees,—  
 But come to *make* it, ez we must to-day,  
 Th' idees hev arms an' legs an' stop the way:  
 It's easy fixin' things in facts an' figgers,— 275  
 They can't resist, nor warn't brought up with niggers;  
 But come to try your the'ry on,—why, then  
 Your facts an' figgers change to ign'ant men  
 Actin' ez ugly—"—"Smite 'em hip an' thigh!"  
 Sez gran'ther, "and let every man-child die! 280  
 Oh for three weeks o' Crommle an' the Lord!  
 Up, Isr'el, to your tents an' grind the sword!"—  
 "Thet kind o' thing worked wal in ole Judee,  
 But you forgit how long it's ben A.D.;  
 You think thet's ellerkence,—I call it shoddy, 285  
 A thing," sez I, "wun't cover soul nor body;  
 I like the plain all-wool o' common-sense,  
 Thet warms ye now, an' will a twelve-month hence.  
 You took to follerin' where the Prophets beckoned,  
 An', fust you knowed on, back come Charles the Second; 290  
 Now wut I want's to hev all *we* gain stick,  
 An' not to start Millennium too quick;  
 We hain't to punish only, but to keep,  
 An' the cure's gut to go a cent'ry deep."  
 "Wall, milk-an'-water ain't the best o' glue," 295  
 Sez he, "an' so you'll find afore you're thru;  
 Ef reshnness venters sunthin', shilly-shally  
 Loses ez often wut's ten times the vally.

Thet exe of urn, when Charles's neck gut split,  
 Opened a gap thet ain't bridged over yit: 300  
 Slav'ry's your Charles, the Lord hez gin the exe"—  
 "Our Charles," sez I, "hez gut eight million necks.  
 The hardest question ain't the black man's right,  
 The trouble is to 'mancipate the white;  
 One's chained in body an' can be sot free, 305  
 But t'other's chained in soul to an idee:  
 It's a long job, but we shall worry thru it;  
 Ef bagnets fail, the spellin'-book must du it."  
 "Hosee," sez he, "I think you're goin' to fail:  
 The rettlesnake ain't dangerous in the tail; 210  
 This 'ere rebellion's nothing but the rattle,—  
 You'll stomp on thet an' think you've won the bettle;  
 It's Slavery thet's the fangs an' thinkin' head,  
 An' ef you want salvation, cresh it dead,—  
 An' cresh it suddin, or you'll larn by waitin' 315  
 Thet Chance wun't stop to listen to debatin'!"—  
 "God's truth!" sez I,—“an' ef I held the club,  
 An' knowed jes' where to strike,—but there's the rub!”—  
 "Strike soon," sez he, "or you'll be deadly ailin',—  
 Folks thet's afeared to fail are sure o' failin'; 320  
 God hates your sneakin' creturs thet believe  
 He'll settle things they run away an' leave!"  
 He brought his foot down fercely, ez he spoke,  
 An' give me sech a startle thet I woke.

# ODE RECITED AT THE HARVARD COMMEMORATION

JULY 21, 1865

Written for the public commemoration of the returning soldiers and of the Harvard dead, this poem was privately printed at Cambridge in 1865; it then appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* for September, 1865; then in *Under the Willows* (1868); and finally in *Three Memorial Poems* (1876). The ninth section was added after magazine publication. Lowell had some difficulty in beginning the poem, but once started, it came in a rush—so much so that in the earliest version some of the lines lacked rhymes. The general form is that irregular "Pindaric" ode which Lowell affected for poems intended for solemn public address.

## I

Weak-winged is song,  
 Nor aims at that clear-ethered height  
 Whither the brave deed climbs for light:  
 We seem to do them wrong,  
 Bringing our robin's-leaf to deck their hearse 5  
 Who in warm life-blood wrote their nobler verse,  
 Our trivial song to honor those who come  
 With ears attuned to strenuous trump and drum,

And shaped in squadron-strophes their desire,  
 Live battle-odes whose lines were steel and fire: 10  
     Yet sometimes feathered words are strong,  
 A gracious memory to buoy up and save  
 From Lethe's dreamless ooze, the common grave  
     Of the unventurous throng.

## II

To-day our Reverend Mother welcomes back 15  
     Her wisest Scholars, those who understood  
 The deeper teaching of her mystic tome,  
     And offered their fresh lives to make it good:  
         No lore of Greece or Rome,  
 No science peddling with the names of things, 20  
 Or reading stars to find inglorious fates,  
         Can lift our life with wings  
 Far from Death's idle gulf that for the many waits,  
     And lengthen out our dates  
 With that clear fame whose memory sings 25  
 In manly hearts to come, and nerves them and dilates:  
 Nor such thy teaching, Mother of us all!  
     Not such the trumpet-call  
     Of thy diviner mood,  
     That could thy sons entice 30  
 From happy homes and toils, the fruitful nest  
 Of those half-virtues which the world calls best,  
     Into War's tumult rude;  
     But rather far that stern device  
 The sponsors chose that round thy cradle stood 35  
     In the dim, unventured wood,  
     The VERITAS that lurks beneath  
     The letter's unprolific sheath,  
     Life of whate'er makes life worth living,  
 Seed-grain of high emprise, immortal food, 40  
     One heavenly thing whereof earth hath the giving.

## III

Many loved Truth, and lavished life's best oil  
     Amid the dust of books to find her,  
 Content at last, for guerdon of their toil,  
     With the cast mantle she hath left behind her. 45  
     Many in sad faith sought for her,  
     Many with crossed hands sighed for her;  
     But these, our brothers, fought for her,  
     At life's dear peril wrought for her,  
     So loved her that they died for her, 50  
     Tasting the raptured fleetness

15. **Reverend Mother**—Harvard personified as Alma Mater. 37. **Veritas**—Veritas (Truth) is the motto of Harvard. 40. **emprise**—undertaking.



Of her divine completeness:  
 Their higher instinct knew  
 Those love her best who to themselves are true,  
 And what they dare to dream of, dare to do; 55  
 They followed her and found her  
 Where all may hope to find,  
 Not in the ashes of the burnt-out mind,  
 But beautiful, with danger's sweetness round her.  
 Where faith made whole with deed 60  
 Breathes its awakening breath  
 Into the lifeless creed,  
 They saw her plumed and mailed,  
 With sweet, stern face unveiled,  
 And all-repaying eyes, look proud on them in death. 65

## IV

Our slender life runs rippling by, and glides  
 Into the silent hollow of the past;  
 What is there that abides  
 To make the next age better for the last?  
 Is earth too poor to give us 70  
 Something to live for here that shall outlive us?  
 Some more substantial boon  
 Than such as flows and ebbs with Fortune's fickle moon?  
 The little that we see  
 From doubt is never free; 75  
 The little that we do  
 Is but half-nobly true;  
 With our laborious hiving  
 What men call treasure, and the gods call dross,  
 Life seems a jest of Fate's contriving, 80  
 Only secure in every one's conniving,  
 A long account of nothings paid with loss,  
 Where we poor puppets, jerked by unseen wires,  
 After our little hour of strut and rave,  
 With all our pasteboard passions and desires, 85  
 Loves, hates, ambitions, and immortal fires,  
 Are tossed pell-mell together in the grave.  
 But stay! no age was e'er degenerate,  
 Unless men held it at too cheap a rate,  
 For in our likeness still we shape our fate. 90  
 Ah, there is something here  
 Unfathomed by the cynic's sneer,  
 Something that gives our feeble light  
 A high immunity from Night,  
 Something that leaps life's narrow bars 95  
 To claim its birthright with the hosts of heaven;  
 A seed of sunshine that can leaven  
 Our earthly dullness with the beams of stars,  
 And glorify our clay  
 With light from fountains elder than the Day; 100  
 A conscience more divine than we,

A gladness fed with secret tears,  
 A vexing, forward-reaching sense  
 Of some more noble permanence;  
     A light across the sea, 105  
 Which haunts the soul and will not let it be,  
 Still beaconing from the heights of undegenerate years.

## v

    Whither leads the path  
     To ampler fates that leads?  
     Not down through flowery meads, 110  
     To reap an aftermath  
 Of youth's vainglorious weeds,  
 But up the steep, amid the wrath  
 And shock of deadly-hostile creeds,  
     Where the world's best hope and stay 115  
 By battle's flashes gropes a desperate way,  
 And every turf the fierce foot clings to bleeds.  
     Peace hath her not ignoble wreath  
     Ere yet the sharp, decisive word  
 Light the black lips of cannon, and the sword 120  
     Dreams in its caseful sheath;  
 But some day the live coal behind the thought,  
     Whether from Baäl's stone obscene,  
     Or from the shrine serene  
     Of God's pure altar brought, 125  
 Bursts up in flame; the war of tongue and pen  
 Learns with what deadly purpose it was fraught,  
 And, helpless in the fiery passion caught,  
 Shakes all the pillared state with shock of men:  
     Some day the soft Ideal that we wooed 130  
 Confronts us fiercely, foe-beset, pursued,  
 And cries reproachful: "Was it, then, my praise,  
 And not myself was loved? Prove now thy truth;  
 I claim of thee the promise of thy youth;  
     Give me thy life, or cower in empty phrase, 135  
 The victim of thy genius, not its mate!"  
     Life may be given in many ways,  
     And loyalty to Truth be sealed  
 As bravely in the closet as the field,  
     So bountiful is Fate; 140  
     But then to stand beside her,  
     When craven churls deride her,  
 To front a lie in arms and not to yield,  
     This shows, methinks, God's plan  
     And measure of a stalwart man, 145  
     Limbed like the old heroic breeds,  
     Who stands self-poised on manhood's solid earth,  
     Not forced to frame excuses for his birth,  
     Fed from within with all the strength he needs.

## VI

Such was he, our Martyr-Chief, 150  
 Whom late the Nation he had led,  
 With ashes on her head,  
 Wept with the passion of an angry grief:  
 Forgive me, if from present things I turn  
 To speak what in my heart will beat and burn, 155  
 And hang my wreath on his world-honored urn.  
 Nature, they say, doth dote,  
 And cannot make a man  
 Save on some worn-out plan,  
 Repeating us by rote: 160  
 For him her Old-World moulds aside she threw,  
 And choosing sweet clay from the breast  
 Of the unexhausted West,  
 With stuff untainted shaped a hero new,  
 Wise, steadfast in the strength of God, and true. 165  
 How beautiful to see  
 Once more a shepherd of mankind indeed,  
 Who loved his charge, but never loved to lead;  
 One whose meek flock the people joyed to be,  
 Not lured by any cheat of birth, 170  
 But by his clear-grained human worth,  
 And brave old wisdom of sincerity!  
 They knew that outward grace is dust;  
 They could not choose but trust  
 In that sure-footed mind's unfaltering skill, 175  
 And supple-tempered will  
 That bent like perfect steel to spring again and thrust.  
 His was no lonely mountain-peak of mind,  
 Thrusting to thin air o'er our cloudy bars,  
 A sea-mark now, now lost in vapors blind; 180  
 Broad prairie rather, genial, level-lined,  
 Fruitful and friendly for all human kind,  
 Yet also nigh to heaven and loved of loftiest stars.  
 Nothing of Europe here,  
 Or, then, of Europe fronting mornward still, 185  
 Ere any names of Serf and Peer  
 Could Nature's equal scheme deface  
 And thwart her genial will;  
 Here was a type of the true elder race,  
 And one of Plutarch's men talked with us face to face. 190  
 I praise him not; it were too late;  
 And some innative weakness there must be  
 In him who condescends to victory  
 Such as the Present gives, and cannot wait,  
 Safe in himself as in a fate. 195  
 So always firmly he:  
 He knew to bide his time,

150. **Martyr-Chief**—Lincoln had been assassinated on April 14, 190. **Plutarch's**—Plutarch (first century A.D.), the most celebrated biographer of ancient times, had in his *Lives* celebrated famous and heroic Greeks and Romans. 192. **innative**—innate, inborn.

And can his fame abide,  
 Still patient in his simple faith sublime,  
 Till the wise years decide. 200  
 Great captains, with their guns and drums,  
 Disturb our judgment for the hour,  
 But at last silence comes;  
 These all are gone, and, standing like a tower,  
 Our children shall behold his fame. 205  
 The kindly-earnest, brave, foreseeing man,  
 Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,  
 New birth of our new soil, the first American.

## VII

Long as man's hope insatiate can discern  
 Or only guess some more inspiring goal 210  
 Outside of Self, enduring as the pole,  
 Along whose course the flying axles burn  
 Of spirits bravely-pitched, earth's manlier brood;  
 Long as below we cannot find  
 The meed that stills the inexorable mind; 215  
 So long this faith to some ideal Good,  
 Under whatever mortal names it masks,  
 Freedom, Law, Country, this ethereal mood  
 That thanks the Fates for their severer tasks,  
 Feeling its challenged pulses leap, 220  
 While others skulk in subterfuges cheap,  
 And, set in Danger's van, has all the boon it asks,  
 Shall win man's praise and woman's love,  
 Shall be a wisdom that we set above  
 All other skills and gifts to culture dear, 225  
 A virtue round whose forehead we inwreath  
 Laurels that with a living passion breathe  
 When other crowns grow, while we twine them, sear  
 What brings us thronging these high rites to pay,  
 And seal these hours the noblest of our year, 230  
 Save that our brothers found this better way?

## VIII

We sit here in the Promised Land  
 That flows with Freedom's honey and milk;  
 But 'twas they won it, sword in hand,  
 Making the nettle danger soft for us as silk. 235  
 We welcome back our bravest and our best;—  
 Ah me! not all! some come not with the rest,  
 Who went forth brave and bright as any here!  
 I strive to mix some gladness with my strain,  
 But the sad strings complain, 240  
 And will not please the ear:  
 I sweep them for a paean, but they wane

232. **Promised Land**—Cf. Ex. 13:5. Colonial New England writers frequently refer to the Puritans as the chosen people, and to New England as their promised land.

Again and yet again  
 Into a dirge, and die away, in pain.  
 In these brave ranks I only see the gaps, 245  
 Thinking of dear ones whom the dumb turf wraps,  
 Dark to the triumph which they died to gain:  
     Fitlier may others greet the living,  
     For me the past is unforgiving;  
         I with uncovered head 250  
         Salute the sacred dead,  
 Who went, and who return not.—Say not so!  
 'Tis not the grapes of Canaan that repay,  
 But the high faith that failed not by the way;  
 Virtue treads paths that end not in the grave; 255  
 No ban of endless night exiles the brave;  
     And to the saner mind  
 We rather seem the dead that stayed behind.  
 Blow, trumpets, all your exultations blow!  
 For never shall their aureoled presence lack: 260  
 I see them muster in a gleaming row,  
 With ever-youthful brows that nobler show;  
 We find in our dull road their shining track;  
     In every nobler mood  
 We feel the orient of their spirit glow, 265  
 Part of our life's unalterable good,  
 Of all our saintlier aspiration;  
     They come transfigured back,  
 Secure from change in their high-hearted ways,  
 Beautiful evermore, and with the rays 270  
 Of morn on their white Shields of Expectation!

## IX

But is there hope to save  
 Even this ethereal essence from the grave?  
 What ever 'scaped Oblivion's subtle wrong  
 Save a few clarion names, or golden threads of song? 275  
     Before my musing eye  
     The mighty ones of old sweep by,  
     Disvoicèd now and insubstantial things,  
     As noisy once as we; poor ghosts of kings,  
 Shadows of empire wholly gone to dust, 280  
 And many races, nameless long ago,  
     To darkness driven by that imperious gust  
     Of ever-rushing Time that here doth blow:  
     O visionary world, condition strange,  
     Where naught abiding is but only Change, 285  
 Where the deep-bolted stars themselves still shift and range!  
     Shall we to more continuance make pretence?  
 Renown builds tombs; a life-estate is Wit;  
     And, bit by bit,

The cunning years steal all from us but woe; 290  
 Leaves are we, whose decays no harvest sow.  
 But, when we vanish hence,  
 Shall they lie forceless in the dark below,  
 Save to make green their little length of sods,  
 Or deepen pansies for a year or two, 295  
 Who now to us are shining-sweet as gods?  
 Was dying all they had the skill to do?  
 That were not fruitless: but the Soul resents  
 Such short-lived service, as if blind events  
 Ruled without her, or earth could so endure; 300  
 She claims a more divine investiture  
 Of longer tenure than Fame's airy rents;  
 Whate'er she touches doth her nature share;  
 Her inspiration haunts the ennobled air,  
 Gives eyes to mountains blind, 305  
 Ears to the deaf earth, voices to the wind,  
 And her clear trump sings succor everywhere  
 By lonely bivouacs to the wakeful mind;  
 For soul inherits all that soul could dare:  
 Yea, Manhood hath a wider span 310  
 And larger privilege of life than man.  
 The single deed, the private sacrifice,  
 So radiant now through proudly-hidden tears,  
 Is covered up erelong from mortal eyes  
 With thoughtless drift of the deciduous years; 315  
 But that high privilege that makes all men peers,  
 That leap of heart whereby a people rise  
 Up to a noble anger's height,  
 And, flamed on by the Fates, not shrink, but grow more bright,  
 That swift validity in noble veins, 320  
 Of choosing danger and disdaining shame,  
 Of being set on flame  
 By the pure fire that flies all contact base  
 But wraps its chosen with angelic might,  
 These are imperishable gains, 325  
 Sure as the sun, medicinal as light,  
 These hold great futures in their lusty reins  
 And certify to earth a new imperial race.

## x

Who now shall sneer?  
 Who dare again to say we trace 330  
 Our lines to a plebeian race?  
 Roundhead and Cavalier!  
 Dumb are those names erewhile in battle loud;  
 Dream-footed as the shadow of a cloud,  
 They flit across the ear: 335

315. *deciduous*—declining, falling off. 332. *Roundhead and Cavalier*—the Roundheads, or Puritans, as typical of the founding of Massachusetts, and the Cavaliers, or followers of Charles I, supposed to represent the early inhabitants of Virginia.



If his triumphs and his tears,  
 Kept not measure with his people? 380  
 Boom, cannon, boom to all the winds and waves!  
 Clash out, glad bells, from every rocking steeple!  
 Banners, advance with triumph, bend your staves!  
 And from every mountain-peak  
 Let beacon-fire to answering beacon speak, 385  
 Katahdin tell Monadnock, Whiteface he,  
 And so leap on in light from sea to sea,  
 Till the glad news be sent  
 Across a kindling continent,  
 Making earth feel more firm and air breathe braver: 390  
 "Be proud! for she is saved, and all have helped to save her!  
 She that lifts up the manhood of the poor,  
 She of the open soul and open door,  
 With room about her hearth for all mankind!  
 The fire is dreadful in her eyes no more; 395  
 From her bold front the helm she doth unbind,  
 Sends all her handmaid armies back to spin,  
 And bids her navies, that so lately hurled  
 Their crashing battle, hold their thunders in,  
 Swimming like birds of calm along the unharmed shore. 400  
 No challenge sends she to the elder world,  
 That looked askance and hated; a light scorn  
 Plays o'er her mouth, as round her mighty knees  
 She calls her children back, and waits the morn  
 Of nobler day, enthroned between her subject seas." 405

## XII

Bow down, dear Land, for thou hast found release!  
 Thy God, in these distempered days,  
 Hath taught thee the sure wisdom of His ways,  
 And through thine enemies hath wrought thy peace!  
 Bow down in prayer and praise! 410  
 No poorest in thy borders but may now  
 Lift to the juster skies a man's enfranchised brow.  
 O Beautiful! my Country! ours once more!  
 Smoothing thy gold of war-dishevelled hair  
 O'er such sweet brows as never other wore, 415  
 And letting thy set lips,  
 Freed from wrath's pale eclipse,  
 The rosy edges of their smile lay bare,  
 What words divine of lover or of poet  
 Could tell our love and make thee know it, 420  
 Among the Nations bright beyond compare?  
 What were our lives without thee?

386. **Katahdin** . . . —The three mountains are, in order from east to west, in Maine, New Hampshire, and New York. 402. **hated**—Upper-class sentiment in Great Britain and France had been hostile to the Union side in the Civil War. Moreover, the threat of invasion by Federal forces was sending French troops out of Mexico, where they had been supporting the ill-fated Emperor Maximilian. 412. **enfranchised**—The reference is, of course, to the abolition of slavery.



What all our lives to save thee?  
 We reck not what we gave thee;  
 We will not dare to doubt thee,  
 But ask whatever else, and we will dare!

## NEW ENGLAND TWO CENTURIES AGO

This essay, a review of the third volume of *History of New England during the Stuart Dynasty* by John G. Palfrey, and of two volumes published by the Massachusetts Historical Society, first appeared in the *North American Review*, January, 1865; then, after pamphlet publication, in *Among My Books* (1870).

THE HISTORY of New England is written imperishably on the face of a continent, and in characters as beneficent as they are enduring. In the Old World national pride feeds itself with the record of battles and conquests;—battles which proved nothing and settled nothing; conquests which  
 5 shifted a boundary on the map, and put one ugly head instead of another on the coin which the people paid to the tax-gatherer. But wherever the New Englander travels among the sturdy commonwealths which have sprung from the seed of the Mayflower, churches, schools, colleges, tell him where the men of his race have been, or their influence has penetrated; and an intelligent free-  
 10 dom is the monument of conquests whose results are not to be measured in square miles. Next to the fugitives whom Moses led out of Egypt, the little ship-load of outcasts who landed at Plymouth two centuries and a half ago are destined to influence the future of the world. The spiritual thirst of mankind has for ages been quenched at Hebrew fountains; but the embodiment in  
 15 human institutions of truths uttered by the Son of Man eighteen centuries ago was to be mainly the work of Puritan thought and Puritan self-devotion. Leave New England out in the cold! While you are plotting it, she sits by every fire-side in the land where there is piety, culture, and free thought.

Faith in God, faith in man, faith in work,—this is the short formula in which  
 20 we may sum up the teaching of the founders of New England, a creed ample enough for this life and the next. If their municipal regulations smack somewhat of Judaism, yet there can be no nobler aim or more practical wisdom than theirs; for it was to make the law of man a living counterpart of the law of God, in their highest conception of it. Were they too earnest in the strife  
 25 to save their souls alive? That is still the problem which every wise and brave man is lifelong in solving. If the Devil take a less hateful shape to us than to our fathers, he is as busy with us as with them; and if we cannot find it in our hearts to break with a gentleman of so much worldly wisdom, who gives such admirable dinners, and whose manners are so perfect, so much the worse for us.  
 30 Looked at on the outside, New England history is dry and unpicturesque. There is no rustle of silks, no waving of plumes, no clink of golden spurs. Our sympathies are not awakened by the changeful destinies, the rise and fall, of great families, whose doom was in their blood. Instead of all this, we have the

homespun fates of Cephas and Prudence repeated in an infinite series of peaceable sameness, and finding space enough for record in the family Bible; we have the noise of axe and hammer and saw, an apotheosis of dogged work, where, reversing the fairy-tale, nothing is left to luck, and, if there be any poetry, it is something that cannot be helped,—the waste of the water over the dam. Extrinsicly, it is prosaic and plebeian; intrinsicly, it is poetic and noble; for it is, perhaps, the most perfect incarnation of an idea the world has ever seen. That idea was not to found a democracy, nor to charter the city of New Jerusalem by an act of the General Court, as gentlemen seem to think whose notions of history and human nature rise like an exhalation from the good things at a Pilgrim Society dinner. Not in the least. They had no faith in the Divine institution of a system which gives Teague, because he can dig, as much influence as Ralph, because he can think, nor in personal at the expense of general freedom. Their view of human rights was not so limited that it could not take in human relations and duties also. They would have been likely to answer the claim, "I am as good as anybody," by a quiet "Yes, for some things, but not for others; as good, doubtless, in your place, where all things are good." What the early settlers of Massachusetts *did* intend, and what they accomplished, was the founding here of a *new* England, and a better one, where the political superstitions and abuses of the old should never have leave to take root. So much, we may say, they deliberately intended. No nobles, either lay or cleric, no great landed estates, and no universal ignorance as the seed-plot of vice and unreason; but an elective magistracy and clergy, land for all who would till it, and reading and writing, will ye nill ye, instead. Here at last, it should seem, simple manhood is to have a chance to play his stake against Fortune with honest dice, uncogged by those three hoary sharpers, Prerogative, Patricianism, and Priestcraft. Whoever has looked into the pamphlets published in England during the Great Rebellion cannot but have been struck by the fact, that the principles and practice of the Puritan Colony had begun to react with considerable force on the mother country; and the policy of the retrograde party there, after the Restoration, in its dealings with New England, finds a curious parallel as to its motives (time will show whether as to its results) in the conduct of the same party towards America during the last four years. This influence and this fear alike bear witness to the energy of the principles at work here.

We have said that the details of New England history were essentially dry

1. **Cephas . . . Prudence**—"typical" New England names. 3. **apotheosis**—deification. 9. **General Court**—the colonial legislature in Massachusetts Bay. 11. **Pilgrim Society**—founded in 1819-1820 to commemorate the coming of the Pilgrims to Plymouth. 12. **Teague**—a typical Irish peasant; the name comes from Sir Robert Howard's play *The Committee*. When Lowell wrote, the large Irish immigration into New England had given rise to various social and political problems. 13. **Ralph**—probably a reminiscence of Ralph in Butler's *Hudibras*, a satiric portrait of a "New Light" Presbyterian. 21-22. **nobles . . . lay or cleric**—In Great Britain bishops, by right of their office, sit in the House of Lords with the secular or lay lords. 24. **will ye nill ye**—usually willy-nilly. 26. **uncogged**—not "loaded." 27. **Prerogative**—The king's prerogative was one of the points of political difference in the English Civil Wars, the **Great Rebellion** of line 28 against Charles I. 33. **conduct . . . party**—During the American Civil War the Tories in England were openly sympathetic with the Confederacy. 34. **years**—"Written in December, 1864." (Lowell's note)

and unpoetic. Everything is near, authentic, and petty. There is no mist of distance to soften outlines, no mirage of tradition to give characters and events an imaginative loom. So much downright work was perhaps never wrought on the earth's surface in the same space of time as during the first forty years after the settlement. But mere work is unpicturesque, and void of sentiment. Irving instinctively divined and admirably illustrated in his "Knickerbocker" the humorous element which lies in this nearness of view, this clear, prosaic daylight of modernness, and this poverty of stage properties, which make the actors and the deeds they were concerned in seem ludicrously small when contrasted with the semi-mythic grandeur in which we have clothed them, as we look backward from the crowned result, and fancy a cause as majestic as our conception of the effect. There was, indeed, one poetic side to the existence otherwise so narrow and practical; and to have conceived this, however partially, is the one original and American thing in Cooper. This diviner glimpse illumines the lives of our Daniel Boones, the man of civilization and old-world ideas confronted with our forest solitudes,—confronted, too, for the first time, with his real self, and so led gradually to disentangle the original substance of his manhood from the artificial results of culture. Here was our new Adam of the wilderness, forced to name anew, not the visible creation of God, but the invisible creation of man, in those forms that lie at the base of social institutions, so insensibly moulding personal character and controlling individual action. Here is the protagonist of our New World epic, a figure as poetic as that of Achilles, as ideally representative as that of Don Quixote, as romantic in its relation to our homespun and plebeian mythus as Arthur in his to the mailed and plumed cycle of chivalry. We do not mean, of course, that Cooper's "Leatherstocking" is all this or anything like it, but that the character typified in him is ideally and potentially all this and more.

But whatever was poetical in the lives of the early New Englanders had something shy, if not sombre, about it. If their natures flowered, it was out of sight, like the fern. It was in the practical that they showed their true quality, as Englishmen are wont. It has been the fashion lately with a few feeble-minded persons to undervalue the New England Puritans, as if they were nothing more than gloomy and narrow-minded fanatics. But all the charges brought against these large-minded and far-seeing men are precisely those which a really able fanatic, Joseph de Maistre, lays at the door of Protestantism. Neither a knowledge of human nature nor of history justifies us in confounding, as is commonly done, the Puritans of Old and New England, or the English Puritans of the third with those of the fifth decade of the seventeenth century. Fanaticism, or, to call it by its milder name, enthusiasm, is only powerful and active so long as it is aggressive. Establish it firmly in power, and it

6. "Knickerbocker"—Irving's *A History of New York by Diedrich Knickerbocker* (1809).  
 15. Daniel Boones—Daniel Boone (1735-1820), the Kentucky pioneer. His life is supposed to have influenced Cooper's *Leatherstocking*. 22. protagonist—chief figure. 22. New World epic—One of the favorite ideals of the Connecticut Wits was to write an epic poem worthy of the young republic. Joel Barlow's *Columbiad* (1807) is typical. 35. Joseph de Maistre—Joseph de Maistre (1754-1821), French statesman and philosopher, the most rigorous upholder of the principle of authority in religion and government in the Napoleonic and post-Napoleonic world, and a staunch upholder of Catholicism.

becomes conservatism, whether it will or no. A sceptre once put in the hand, the grip is instinctive; and he who is firmly seated in authority soon learns to think security, and not progress, the highest lesson of statecraft. From the summit of power men no longer turn their eyes upward, but begin to look about them. Aspiration sees only one side of every question; possession, many. And the English Puritans, after their revolution was accomplished, stood in even a more precarious position than most successful assailants of the prerogative of whatever *is* to continue in being. They had carried a political end by means of a religious revival. The fulcrum on which they rested their lever to overturn the existing order of things (as history always placidly calls the particular forms of *disorder* for the time being) was in the soul of man. They could not renew the fiery gush of enthusiasm when once the molten metal had begun to stiffen in the mould of policy and precedent. The religious element of Puritanism became insensibly merged in the political; and, its one great man taken away, it died, as passions have done before, of possession. It was one thing to shout with Cromwell before the battle of Dunbar, "Now, Lord, arise, and let thine enemies be scattered!" and to snuffle, "Rise, Lord, and keep us safe in our benefices, our sequestered estates, and our five per cent!" Puritanism meant something when Captain Hodgson, riding out to battle through the morning mist, turns over the command of his troop to a lieutenant, and stays to hear the prayer of a cornet, there was "so much of God in it." Become traditional, repeating the phrase without the spirit, reading the present backward as if it were written in Hebrew, translating Jehovah by "I was" instead of "I am,"—it was no more like its former self than the hollow drum made of Zisca's skin was like the grim captain whose soul it had once contained. Yet the change was inevitable, for it is not safe to confound the things of Caesar with the things of God. Some honest republicans, like Ludlow, were never able to comprehend the chilling contrast between the ideal aim and the material fulfilment, and looked askance on the strenuous reign of Oliver,—that rugged boulder of primitive manhood lying lonely there on the dead level of the century,—as if some crooked changeling had been laid in the cradle instead of that fair babe of the Commonwealth they had dreamed. Truly there is a tide in the affairs of men, but there is no gulf-stream setting forever in one direction; and those waves of enthusiasm on whose crumbling crests we sometimes see nations lifted for a gleaming moment are wont to have a gloomy trough before and behind.

But the founders of New England, though they must have sympathized vividly with the struggles and triumphs of their brethren in the mother country, were never subjected to the same trials and temptations, never hampered with the same lumber of usages and tradition. They were not driven to win power by doubtful and desperate ways, nor to maintain it by any compro-

16-17. **Cromwell . . . scattered**—a battle between Cromwell's army and Scotch troops under Leslie, fought Sept. 3, 1650. The quotation seems to be from the *Memoirs* of Captain John Hodgson (died 1684), an officer in the Parliamentary army, published in Slingsby's *Original Memoirs . . . of the Civil War* (1806). 21. **cornet**—the color-bearer in a cavalry troop. 23. **Jehovah**—The Hebrew *Jahveh* (Jehovah) is connected with the Hebrew root of the verb to be; hence such a passage as Ex. 3:14. 24. **Zisca's skin**—John Ziska (1360-1424), the noted Hussite leader, requested that after his death his skin should be used as a drumhead to encourage his followers to battle. 26-27. **Caesar . . . God**—*Cf.* Mat. 22:21. 27. **Ludlow**—Edmund Ludlow (1617-1692), English general, and one of the regicides, or judges, of Charles I, who signed his death warrant in 1649. 32. **tide**—*Cf.* *Julius Caesar*, Act IV, scene 3, line 218.

mises of the ends which make it worth having. From the outset they were builders, without need of first pulling down, whether to make room or to provide material. For thirty years after the colonization of the Bay, they had absolute power to mould as they would the character of their adolescent commonwealth. During this time a whole generation would have grown to manhood who knew the Old World only by report, in whose habitual thought kings, nobles, and bishops would be as far away from all present and practical concern as the figures in a fairy-tale, and all whose memories and associations, all their unconscious training by eye and ear, were New English wholly. Nor were the men whose influence was greatest in shaping the framework and the policy of the Colony, in any true sense of the word, fanatics. Enthusiasts, perhaps, they were, but with them the fermentation had never gone further than the ripeness of the vinous stage. Disappointment had never made it acetous, nor had it ever putrefied into the turbid zeal of Fifth Monarchism and sectarian whimsey. There is no better ballast for keeping the mind steady on its keel, and saving it from all risk of *crankiness*, than business. And they were business men, men of facts and figures no less than of religious earnestness. The sum of two hundred thousand pounds had been invested in their undertaking,—a sum, for that time, truly enormous as the result of private combination for a doubtful experiment. That their enterprise might succeed, they must show a balance on the right side of the counting-house ledger, as well as in their private accounts with their own souls. The liberty of praying when and how they would must be balanced with an ability of paying when and as they ought. Nor is the resulting fact in this case at variance with the *a priori* theory. They succeeded in making their thought the life and soul of a body politic, still powerful, still benignly operative, after two centuries; a thing which no mere fanatic ever did or ever will accomplish. Sober, earnest, and thoughtful men, it was no Utopia, no New Atlantis, no realization of a splendid dream, which they had at heart, but the establishment of the divine principle of Authority on the common interest and the common consent; the making, by a contribution from the free-will of all, a power which should curb and guide the free-will of each for the general good. If they were stern in their dealings with sectaries, it should be remembered that the Colony was in fact the private property of the Massachusetts Company, that unity was essential to its success, and that John of Leyden had taught them how unendurable by the nostrils of honest men is the corruption of the right of private judgment in the evil and selfish hearts of men when no thorough mental training has developed the understanding and given the judgment its needful means of comparison and correction. They knew that liberty in the hands of feeble-minded and unreasoning

3. **thirty . . . Bay**—that is, from 1630 to 1660, the date of the Restoration. 14. **Fifth Monarchism**—The Fifth Monarchy men were a sect in Cromwell's time which believed it essential to inaugurate the new kingdom of Christ by force. The five great monarchies were Assyria, Persia, Greece, Rome, and the Christian. In 1657 and 1661 there were uprisings by the sect. 16. **crankiness**—A ship is crank or cranky when it is insufficiently ballasted; hence the pun in the text on religious cranks. 28. **Utopia . . . Atlantis**—The *Utopia* of Sir Thomas More (1516) and the *New Atlantis* of Francis Bacon (1624) are both imaginary commonwealths laid vaguely in the "west." 33-34. **private property**—The Massachusetts Bay Colony was sent out by the Massachusetts Company, a private corporation chartered in 1629. 35. **John of Leyden**—Johann Bockelson or Bockhold (about 1510-1536), known as John of Leyden, an Anabaptist fanatic.

persons (and all the worse if they are honest) means nothing more than the supremacy of their particular form of imbecility; means nothing less, therefore, than downright chaos, a Bedlam-chaos of monomaniacs and bores. What was to be done with men and women, who bore conclusive witness to the fall of man by insisting on walking up the broad-aisle of the meeting-house in a costume which that event had put forever out of fashion? About their treatment of witches, too, there has been a great deal of ignorant babble. Puritanism had nothing whatever to do with it. They acted under a delusion, which, with an exception here and there (and those mainly medical men, like Wierus and Webster), darkened the understanding of all Christendom. Dr. Henry More was no Puritan; and his letter to Glanvil, prefixed to the third edition of the "Sadducismus Triumphatus," was written in 1678, only fourteen years before the trials at Salem. Bekker's "Bezauberte Welt" was published in 1693; and in the Preface he speaks of the difficulty of overcoming "the prejudices in which not only ordinary men, but the learned also, are obstinate." In Hathaway's case, 1702, Chief-Justice Holt, in charging the jury, expresses no disbelief in the possibility of witchcraft, and the indictment implies its existence. Indeed, the natural reaction from the Salem mania of 1692 put an end to belief in devilish compacts and demoniac possessions sooner in New England than elsewhere. The last we hear of it there is in 1720, when the Rev. Mr. Turell of Medford detected and exposed an attempted cheat by two girls. Even in 1692, it was the foolish breath of Cotton Mather and others of the clergy that blew the dying embers of this ghastly superstition into a flame; and they were actuated partly by a desire to bring about a religious revival, which might stay for a while the hastening lapse of their own authority, and still more by that credulous scepticism of feeble-minded piety which dreads the cutting away of an orthodox tumor of misbelief, as if the life-blood of faith would follow, and would keep even a stumbling-block in the way of salvation, if only enough generations had tripped over it to make it venerable. The witches were condemned on precisely the same grounds that in our day led to the condemnation of "Essays and Reviews."

But Puritanism was already in the decline when such things were possible. What had been a wondrous and intimate experience of the soul, a flash into the very crypt and basis of man's nature from the fire of trial, had become ritual and tradition. In prosperous times the faith of one generation becomes the formality of the next. "The necessity of a reformation," set forth by order

9. Wierus—Johann Wierus (1515-1588), author of *De praestigis daemonum* (1563), a study of witchcraft. 10. Webster—John Webster (1610-1682), author of *Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft* (1677), generally skeptical of witchcraft. 10. Henry More—(1614-1687) one of the chief of the "Cambridge Platonists." 11. Glanvil—Joseph Glanvil (1636-1680), one of the chief proponents of the new science, whose *Sadducismus Triumphatus* appeared in 1681. 13. Bekker—Balthazar Bekker (1634-1698), a Dutch theologian, whose *De Betoverde Wereld* advances a view of demoniacal possession. 15. Hathaway's case—In 1700 Richard Hathaway accused Sarah Morduck of witchcraft. She was acquitted, and Hathaway punished as an impostor. The presiding justice was Sir John Holt (1642-1710), Chief Justice of the King's Bench, who acquitted all the defendants in cases of witchcraft which came before him. 20. Turell—the Rev. Ebenezer Turell (1702-1778), whose entire life was spent at Medford. 21. 1692—the year of the outbreak of the "Witchcraft Delusion" at Salem. 22. Cotton Mather—the Rev. Cotton Mather (1663-1728). Lowell is not fair to Mather, who seems to have been very cautious in his writings on witchcraft. 31. "Essays and Reviews"—This volume of liberal essays on theological subjects, published in 1861, aroused great controversy in Great Britain.

of the Synod which met at Cambridge in 1679, though no doubt overstating the case, shows how much even at that time the ancient strictness had been loosened. The country had grown rich, its commerce was large, and wealth did its natural work in making life softer and more worldly, commerce in de-  
 5 provincializing the minds of those engaged in it. But Puritanism had already done its duty. As there are certain creatures whose whole being seems occupied with an egg-laying errand they are sent upon, incarnate ovipositors, their bodies but bags to hold this precious deposit, their legs of use only to carry them where they may most safely be rid of it, so sometimes a generation seems to  
 10 have no other end than the conception and ripening of certain germs. Its blind stirrings, its apparently aimless seeking hither and thither, are but the driving of an instinct to be done with its parturient function toward these principles of future life and power. Puritanism, believing itself quick with the seed of religious liberty, laid, without knowing it, the egg of democracy. The English  
 15 Puritans pulled down church and state to rebuild Zion on the ruins, and all the while it was not Zion, but America, they were building. But if their millennium went by, like the rest, and left men still human; if they, like so many saints and martyrs before them, listened in vain for the sound of that trumpet which was to summon all souls to a resurrection from the body of this death  
 20 which men call life,—it is not for us, at least, to forget the heavy debt we owe them. It was the drums of Naseby and Dunbar that gathered the minute-men on Lexington Common; it was the red dint of the axe on Charles's block that marked One in our era. The Puritans had their faults. They were narrow, ungenial; they could not understand the text, "I have piped to you and ye  
 25 have not danced," nor conceived that saving one's soul should be the cheer-fullest, and not the dreariest, of businesses. Their preachers had a way, like the painful Mr. Perkins, of pronouncing the word *damn* with such an emphasis as left a doleful echo in their auditors' ears a good while after. And it was natural that men who captained or accompanied the exodus from existing  
 30 forms and associations into the doubtful wilderness that led to the promised land, should find more to their purpose in the Old Testament than in the New. As respects the New England settlers, however visionary some of their religious tenets may have been, their political ideas savored of the reality, and it was no Nephelococcygia of which they drew the plan, but of a commonwealth whose  
 35 foundation was to rest on solid and familiar earth. If what they did was done in a corner, the results of it were to be felt to the ends of the earth; and the figure of Winthrop should be as venerable in history as that of Romulus is barbarously grand in legend.

I am inclined to think that many of our national characteristics, which are  
 40 sometimes attributed to climate and sometimes to institutions, are traceable to

1. **Synod** . . . 1679—A synod is a church assembly, here of representatives of the Presbyterian churches, of higher authority than the presbytery. This particular meeting in Massachusetts was famous. 7. **ovipositors**—egg-laying organs. 15. **Zion**—symbolically, the Christian Church. 21. **Dunbar**—1617, p. 993. 22. **Charles's block**—Charles I was executed in 1649. 24-25. "I have piped . . . danced"—*Cf.* Luke 7:32. 27. **Perkins**—William Perkins (1558-1602), one of the early leaders of English Puritanism. 34. **Nephelococcygia**—Cloud-Cuckoo-Town, from Aristophanes' comedy *The Birds*; used of any fantastic utopian dream. 37. **Winthrop**—John Winthrop (1587-1649), long governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony. 37. **Romulus**—with Remus, the mythical founder of Rome.

the influences of Puritan descent. We are apt to forget how very large a proportion of our population is descended from emigrants who came over before 1660. Those emigrants were in great part representatives of that element of English character which was most susceptible of religious impressions; in other words, the most earnest and imaginative. Our people still differ from their English cousins (as they are fond of calling themselves when they are afraid we may do them a mischief) in a certain capacity for enthusiasm, a devotion to abstract principle, an openness to ideas, a greater aptness for intuitions than for the slow processes of the syllogism, and, as derivative from these, in minds of looser texture, a light-armed, skirmishing habit of thought, and a positive preference of the birds in the bush,—an excellent quality of character *before* you have your bird in the hand. 5 10

There have been two great distributing centres of the English race on this continent, Massachusetts and Virginia. Each has impressed the character of its early legislators on the swarms it has sent forth. Their ideas are in some fundamental respects the opposites of each other, and we can only account for it by an antagonism of thought beginning with the early framers of their respective institutions. New England abolished caste; in Virginia they still talk of “quality folks.” But it was in making education not only common to all, but in some sense compulsory on all, that the destiny of the free republics of America was practically settled. Every man was to be trained, not only to the use of arms, but of his wits also; and it is these which alone make the others effective weapons for the maintenance of freedom. You may disarm the hands, but not the brains, of a people, and to know what should be defended is the first condition of successful defence. Simple as it seems, it was a great discovery that the key of knowledge could turn both ways, that it could open, as well as lock, the door of power to the many. The only things a New-Englander was ever locked out of were the jails. It is quite true that our Republic is the heir of the English Commonwealth; but as we trace events backward to their causes, we shall find it true also, that what made our Revolution a foregone conclusion was that act of the General Court, passed in May, 1647, which established the system of common schools. “To the end that learning may not be buried in the graves of our forefathers in Church and Commonwealth, the Lord assisting our endeavors, it is therefore ordered by this Court and authority thereof, that every township in this jurisdiction, after the Lord hath increased them to fifty householders, shall then forthwith appoint one within their towns to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write and read.” 15 20 25 30 35

Passing through some Massachusetts village, perhaps at a distance from any house, it may be in the midst of a piece of woods where four roads meet, one may sometimes even yet see a small square one-story building, whose use would not be long doubtful. It is summer, and the flickering shadows of forest-leaves dapple the roof of the little porch, whose door stands wide, and shows, hanging on either hand, rows of straw hats and bonnets, that look as if they had done good service. As you pass the open windows, you hear whole platoons of high-pitched voices discharging words of two or three syllables with won- 40 45

32-37. “To the end . . . read”—Lowell quotes the preamble of the act of May, 1647, to which he refers. 45. **high-pitched voices**—Formerly, young children learned their “a-b-abs” by reciting them in chorus.



derful precision and unanimity. Then there is a pause, and the voice of the officer in command is heard reproving some raw recruit whose vocal musket hung fire. Then the drill of the small infantry begins anew, but pauses again because some urchin—who agrees with Voltaire that the superfluous is a very

5 necessary thing—insists on spelling “subtraction” with an *s* too much.

If you had the good fortune to be born and bred in the Bay State, your mind is thronged with half-sad, half-humorous recollections. The a-b abs of little voices long since hushed in the mould, or ringing now in the pulpit, at the bar, or in the Senate-chamber, come back to the ear of memory. You remember the high stool on which culprits used to be elevated with the tall paper fool’s-cap on their heads, blushing to the ears; and you think with wonder how you have seen them since as men climbing the world’s penance-stools of ambition without a blush, and gladly giving everything for life’s caps and bells. And you have pleasanter memories of going after pond-lilies, of angling for horn-pouts,—that queer bat among the fishes,—of nutting, of walking over the creaking snow-crust in winter, when the warm breath of every household was curling up silently in the keen blue air. You wonder if life has any rewards more solid and permanent than the Spanish dollar that was hung around your neck to be restored again next day, and conclude sadly that it was

10 but too true a prophecy and emblem of all worldly success. But your moralizing is broken short off by a rattle of feet and the pouring forth of the whole swarm,—the boys dancing and shouting,—the mere effervescence of the fixed air of youth and animal spirits uncorked,—the sedater girls in confidential twos and threes decanting secrets out of the mouth of one cape-bonnet into that of

15 another. Times have changed since the jackets and trousers used to draw up on one side of the road, and the petticoats on the other, to salute with bow and curtsy the white neckcloth of the parson or the squire, if it chanced to pass during intermission.

Now this little building, and others like it, were an original kind of fortification invented by the founders of New England. They are the martello-towers that protect our coast. This was the great discovery of our Puritan forefathers. They were the first lawgivers who saw clearly and enforced practically the simple moral and political truth, that knowledge was not an alms to be dependent on the chance charity of private men or the precarious pittance of a

20 trust-fund, but a sacred debt which the Commonwealth owed to every one of her children. The opening of the first grammar-school was the opening of the first trench against monopoly in church and state; the first row of trammels and pothooks which the little Shearjashubs and Elkanahs blotted and blubbered across their copy-books, was the preamble to the Declaration of Inde-

4. *superfluous*—The quotation from Voltaire (1694-1778) is from *Le Mondain*: “Le superflu, chose très-nécessaire.” 18. *Spanish dollar*—Until the creation of a Federal currency, and for some time after, Spanish dollars circulated in this country. The whole passage is reminiscent of Lowell’s own childhood experiences. 30. *martello-towers*—small round towers constituting small forts against an invader. They were erected in England when that country feared a Napoleonic invasion. 36. *first grammar-school*—The first free school in Massachusetts was founded in 1635. 37. *trammels*—rings or links to hold a crook over a fire. The writing of untrained children would look like that. 38. *pothooks*—hooks over a fireplace for much the same purpose. 38. *Shearjashubs . . . Elkanahs*—Cf. Isa. 7: 3 and Ex. 6: 24. Lowell is making fun of the uncouth biblical names given Puritan children.

pendence. The men who gave every man the chance to become a landholder, who made the transfer of land easy, and put knowledge within the reach of all, have been called narrow-minded, because they were intolerant. But intolerant of what? Of what they believed to be dangerous nonsense, which, if left free, would destroy the last hope of civil and religious freedom. They had not come here that every man might do that which seemed good in his own eyes, but in the sight of God. Toleration, moreover, is something which is won, not granted. It is the equilibrium of neutralized forces. The Puritans had no notion of tolerating mischief. They looked upon their little commonwealth as upon their own private estate and homestead, as they had a right to do, and would no more allow the Devil's religion of unreason to be preached therein, than we should permit a prize-fight in our gardens. They were narrow; in other words they had an edge to them, as men that serve in great emergencies must; for a Gordian knot is settled sooner with a sword than a beetle. 5

The founders of New England are commonly represented in the after-dinner oratory of their descendants as men "before their time," as it is called; in other words, deliberately prescient of events resulting from new relations of circumstances, or even from circumstances new in themselves, and therefore altogether alien from their own experience. Of course, such a class of men is to be reckoned among those non-existent human varieties so gravely catalogued by the ancient naturalists. If a man could shape his action with reference to what should happen a century after his death, surely it might be asked of him to call in the help of that easier foreknowledge which reaches from one day to the next,—a power of prophecy whereof we have no example. I do not object to a wholesome pride of ancestry, though a little mythical, if it be accompanied with the feeling that *noblesse oblige*, and do not result merely in a placid self-satisfaction with our own mediocrity, as if greatness, like righteousness, could be imputed. We can pardon it even in conquered races, like the Welsh and Irish, who make up to themselves for present degradation by imaginary empires in the past whose boundaries they can extend at will, carrying the bloodless conquests of fancy over regions laid down upon no map, and concerning which authentic history is enviously dumb. Those long beadrolls of Keltic kings cannot tyrannize over us, and we can be patient so long as our own crowns are uncracked by the shillalah sceptres of their actual representatives. In our own case, it would not be amiss, perhaps, if we took warning by the example of Teague and Taffy. At least, I think it would be wise in our orators not to put forward so prominently the claim of the Yankee to universal dominion, and his intention to enter upon it forthwith. If we do our duties as honestly and as much in the fear of God as our forefathers did, we need not 15

6. every man—Cf. Deut. 12: 8. 14. Gordian knot—In Greek story, an intricate knot tied by Gordius, a Phrygian king. According to the oracle, whoever should untie it would rule Asia. Alexander the Great cut it with his sword. 14. beetle—See note 492, p. 968. 20-21. non-existent . . . naturalists—reference to the "unnatural natural history" recorded by such writers as Pliny. 26. noblesse oblige—nobility obliges; that is, those who are noble ought to act nobly. 29. Irish—When Lowell wrote, Ireland formed part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. 32. beadrolls—lists. 33. Keltic—more commonly, Celtic. 34. shillalah—An Irishman's stick is his shillalah. The whole passage reflects Lowell's amusement and disgust at the invasion of Massachusetts by the immigrant Irish. 36. Teague . . . Taffy—generic names for the Irish and the Welsh. Taffy is a corruption of David.

trouble ourselves much about other titles to empire. The broad foreheads and long heads will win the day at last in spite of all heraldry, and it will be enough if we feel as keenly as our Puritan founders did that those organs of empire may be broadened and lengthened by culture. That our self-complacency should not increase the complacency of outsiders is not to be wondered at. As *we* sometimes take credit to ourselves (since all commendation of our ancestry is indirect self-flattery) for what the Puritan fathers never were, so there are others who, to gratify a spite against their descendants, blame them for not having been what they could not be; namely, before their time in such matters as slavery, witchcraft, and the like. The view, whether of friend or foe, is equally unhistorical, nay, without the faintest notion of all that makes history worth having as a teacher. That our grandfathers shared in the prejudices of their day is all that makes them human to us; and that nevertheless they could act bravely and wisely on occasion makes them only the more venerable. If certain barbarisms and superstitions disappeared earlier in New England than elsewhere, not by the decision of exceptionally enlightened or humane judges, but by force of public opinion, that is the fact that is interesting and instructive for us. I never thought it an abatement of Hawthorne's genius that he came lineally from one who sat in judgment on the witches in 1692; it was interesting rather to trace something hereditary in the sombre character of his imagination, continually vexing itself to account for the origin of evil, and baffled for want of that simple solution in a personal Devil. . . .

## DEMOCRACY

Inaugural Address on Assuming the Presidency of the Birmingham and Midland Institute, Birmingham, England, 6 October, 1884.

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**H**E MUST be a born leader or misleader of men, or must have been sent into the world unfurnished with that modulating and restraining balance-wheel which we call a sense of humor, who, in old age, has as strong a confidence in his opinions and in the necessity of bringing the universe into conformity with them as he had in youth. In a world the very condition of whose being is that it should be in perpetual flux, where all seems mirage, and the one abiding thing is the effort to distinguish realities from

**1-2. broad . . . heads**—characteristic of the “Nordic” peoples. **3-4. organs of empire**—oblique reference to the phrenological doctrine that particular capacities are represented by “bumps” or other cranial characteristics. **4. culture**—“It is curious, that, when Cromwell proposed to transfer a colony from New England to Ireland, one of the conditions insisted on in Massachusetts was that a college should be established.” (Lowell’s note) **19. one**—John Hawthorne, one of the judges in the Salem witchcraft trials, sometimes half-humorously blamed by the Hawthorne family for any evils that befell them. **22. Devil**—The rest of the essay is an examination of the various books under review, and lacks the general interest of the first portions. **28. flux**—the doctrine of Heraclitus of Ephesus (6th century B.C.) that everything is in a state of flux.

appearances, the elderly man must be indeed of a singularly tough and valid fibre who is certain that he has any clarified residuum of experience, any assured verdict of reflection, that deserves to be called an opinion, or who, even if he had, feels that he is justified in holding mankind by the button while he is expounding it. And in a world of daily—nay, almost hourly—journalism, where every clever man, every man who thinks himself clever, or whom anybody else thinks clever, is called upon to deliver his judgment point-blank and at the word of command on every conceivable subject of human thought, or, on what sometimes seems to him very much the same thing, on every inconceivable display of human want of thought, there is such a spendthrift waste of all those commonplace places which furnish the permitted staple of public discourse that there is little chance of beguiling a new tune out of the one-stringed instrument on which we have been thrumming so long. In this desperate necessity one is often tempted to think that, if all the words of the dictionary were tumbled down in a heap and then all those fortuitous juxtapositions and combinations that made tolerable sense were picked out and pieced together, we might find among them some poignant suggestions towards novelty of thought or expression. But, alas! it is only the great poets who seem to have this unsolicited profusion of unexpected and incalculable phrase, this infinite variety of topic. For everybody else everything has been said before, and said over again after. He who has read his Aristotle will be apt to think that observation has on most points of general applicability said its last word, and he who has mounted the tower of Plato to look abroad from it will never hope to climb another with so lofty a vantage of speculation. Where it is so simple if not so easy a thing to hold one's peace, why add to the general confusion of tongues? There is something disheartening, too, in being expected to fill up not less than a certain measure of time, as if the mind were an hour-glass, that need only be shaken and set on one end or the other, as the case may be, to run its allotted sixty minutes with decorous exactitude. I recollect being once told by the late eminent naturalist, Agassiz, that when he was to deliver his first lecture as professor (at Zürich, I believe) he had grave doubts of his ability to occupy the prescribed three quarters of an hour. He was speaking without notes, and glancing anxiously from time to time at the watch that lay before him on the desk. "When I had spoken a half hour," he said, "I had told them everything I knew in the world, everything! Then I began to repeat myself," he added, roguishly, "and I have done nothing else ever since." Beneath the humorous exaggeration of the story I seemed to see the face of a very serious and improving moral. And yet if one were to say only what he had to say and then stopped, his audience would feel defrauded of their honest measure. Let us take courage by the example of the French, whose exportation of Bordeaux wines increases as the area of their land in vineyards is diminished.

To me, somewhat hopelessly revolving these things, the undelayable year has rolled round, and I find myself called upon to say something in this place,

12. one-stringed instrument—the tongue. 30. Agassiz—Jean Louis Rodolphe Agassiz (1807-1873), famous naturalist, who became professor at Harvard in 1848. Lowell has an ode to him. 30. Zürich—in Switzerland, Agassiz's own country. 42. revolving—a Latin use of the word, which here means pondering. 43. this place—The Institute was established to give scientific instruction to the laboring classes.

where so many wiser men have spoken before me. Precluded, in my quality of national guest, by motives of taste and discretion, from dealing with any question of immediate and domestic concern, it seemed to me wisest, or at any rate most prudent, to choose a topic of comparatively abstract interest, and to ask  
 5 your indulgence for a few somewhat generalized remarks on a matter concerning which I had some experimental knowledge, derived from the use of such eyes and ears as Nature had been pleased to endow me withal, and such report as I had been able to win from them. The subject which most readily suggested itself was the spirit and the working of those conceptions of life and polity  
 10 which are lumped together, whether for reproach or commendation, under the name of Democracy. By temperament and education of a conservative turn, I saw the last years of that quaint Arcadia which French travellers saw with delighted amazement a century ago, and have watched the change (to me a sad one) from an agricultural to a proletary population. The testimony of Balaam  
 15 should carry some conviction. I have grown to manhood and am now growing old with the growth of this system of government in my native land, have watched its advances, or what some would call its encroachments, gradual and irresistible as those of a glacier, have been an ear-witness to the forebodings of wise and good and timid men, and have lived to see those forebodings belied  
 20 by the course of events, which is apt to show itself humorously careless of the reputation of prophets. I recollect hearing a sagacious old gentleman say in 1840 that the doing away with the property qualification for suffrage twenty years before had been the ruin of the State of Massachusetts; that it had put public credit and private estate alike at the mercy of demagogues. I lived to  
 25 see that Commonwealth twenty odd years later paying the interest on her bonds in gold, though it cost her sometimes nearly three for one to keep her faith, and that while suffering an unparalleled drain of men and treasure in helping to sustain the unity and self-respect of the nation.

If universal suffrage has worked ill in our larger cities, as it certainly has,  
 30 this has been mainly because the hands that wielded it were untrained to its use. There the election of a majority of the trustees of the public money is controlled by the most ignorant and vicious of a population which has come to us from abroad, wholly unpracticed in self-government and incapable of assimilation by American habits and methods. But the finances of our towns, where  
 35 the native tradition is still dominant and whose affairs are discussed and settled in a public assembly of the people, have been in general honestly and prudently administered. Even in manufacturing towns, where a majority of the voters live by their daily wages, it is not so often the recklessness as the moderation of public expenditure that surprises an old-fashioned observer. "The beggar is  
 40 in the saddle at last," cries Proverbial Wisdom. "Why, in the name of all

12. **Arcadia**—French officers and travelers who came to the United States during the American Revolution and in subsequent decades determinedly interpreted the republic in idealistic terms. See C. H. Sherrill, *French Memories of Eighteenth Century America* (1915). 14. **proletary**—composed of the poorest people. 14. **testimony of Balaam**—Cf. Num. 22:34. 25. **twenty odd years later**—that is, during the American Civil War, when the dollar had depreciated to one-third its face value. The British had bought most of the bonds. 29. **If universal suffrage**—This paragraph was not in the address as delivered. 39. **"The beggar . . ."**—The usual form of the proverb is: Set a beggar on horseback and he'll ride to the devil.

former experience, doesn't he ride to the Devil?" Because in the very act of mounting he ceased to be a beggar and became part owner of the piece of property he bestrides. The last thing we need be anxious about is property. It always has friends or the means of making them. If riches have wings to fly away from their owner, they have wings also to escape danger.

I hear America sometimes playfully accused of sending you all your storms, and am in the habit of parrying the charge by alleging that we are enabled to do this because, in virtue of our protective system, we can afford to make better bad weather than anybody else. And what wiser use could we make of it than to export it in return for the paupers which some European countries are good enough to send over to us who have not attained to the same skill in the manufacture of them? But bad weather is not the worst thing that is laid at our door. A French gentleman, not long ago, forgetting Burke's monition of how unwise it is to draw an indictment against a whole people, has charged us with the responsibility of whatever he finds disagreeable in the morals or manners of his countrymen. If M. Zola or some other competent witness would only go into the box and tell us what those morals and manners were before our example corrupted them! But I confess that I find little to interest and less to edify me in these international bandyings of "You're another."

I shall address myself to a single point only in the long list of offences of which we are more or less gravely accused, because that really includes all the rest. It is that we are infecting the Old World with what seems to be thought the entirely new disease of Democracy. It is generally people who are in what are called easy circumstances who can afford the leisure to treat themselves to a handsome complaint, and these experience an immediate alleviation when once they have found a sonorous Greek name to abuse it by. There is something consolatory also, something flattering to their sense of personal dignity, and to that conceit of singularity which is the natural recoil from our uneasy consciousness of being commonplace, in thinking ourselves victims of a malady by which no one had ever suffered before. Accordingly they find it simpler to class under one comprehensive heading whatever they find offensive to their nerves, their tastes, their interests, or what they suppose to be their opinions, and christen it Democracy, much as physicians label every obscure disease gout, or as cross-grained fellows lay their ill-temper to the weather. But is it really a new ailment, and, if it be, is America answerable for it? Even if she were, would it account for the phylloxera, and hoof-and-mouth disease, and bad harvests, and bad English, and the German bands, and the Boers, and all the other discomforts with which these later days have vexed the souls of them

**13-14. Burke's monition**—In his *Speech on Conciliation with America* Burke said: "I do not know the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people." **16. Zola**—Emile Zola (1840-1902), French naturalistic novelist, who had just published *Germinal* (1885), and whose Rougon-Macquart series of novels was a bitter indictment of the Second Empire in France. **37. phylloxera**—plant lice. **37. hoof-and-mouth disease**—a disease of cattle, against which quarantine is necessary. **38. German bands**—of street musicians. **38. Boers**—In 1877 Great Britain had formally annexed the (Boer) Transvaal in South Africa; the Boers took arms, and in 1881 Great Britain formally recognized their independence.

that go in chariots? Yet I have seen the evil example of Democracy in America cited as the source and origin of things quite as heterogeneous and quite as little connected with it by any sequence of cause and effect. Surely this ferment is nothing new. It has been at work for centuries, and we are more conscious  
 5 of it only because in this age of publicity, where the newspapers offer a rostrum to whoever has a grievance, or fancies that he has, the bubbles and scum thrown up by it are more noticeable on the surface than in those dumb ages when there was a cover of silence and suppression on the cauldron. Bernardo Navagero, speaking of the Provinces of Lower Austria in 1546, tells us that "in them  
 10 there are five sorts of persons, Clergy, Barons, Nobles, Burghers, and Peasants. Of these last no account is made, *because they have no voice in the Diet.*"

Nor was it among the people that subversive or mistaken doctrines had their rise. A Father of the Church said that property was theft many centuries be-  
 15 fore Proudhon was born. Bourdaloue reaffirmed it. Montesquieu was the inventor of national workshops, and of the theory that the State owed every man a living. Nay, was not the Church herself the first organized Democracy? A few centuries ago the chief end of man was to keep his soul alive, and then the little kernel of leaven that sets the gases at work was religious, and produced  
 20 the Reformation. Even in that, far-sighted persons like the Emperor Charles V. saw the germ of political and social revolution. Now that the chief end of man seems to have become the keeping of the body alive, and as comfortably alive as possible, the leaven also has become wholly political and social. But there had also been social upheavals before the Reformation and contemporaneously  
 25 with it, especially among men of Teutonic race. The Reformation gave outlet and direction to an unrest already existing. Formerly the immense majority of men—our brothers—knew only their sufferings, their wants, and their desires. They are beginning now to know their opportunity and their power. All persons who see deeper than their plates are rather inclined to thank God for it  
 30 than to bewail it, for the sores of Lazarus have a poison in them against which Dives has no antidote.

There can be no doubt that the spectacle of a great and prosperous Democracy on the other side of the Atlantic must react powerfully on the aspirations and political theories of men in the Old World who do not find things to their

**5. rostrum**—platform. **9. Lower Austria**—the country around Vienna. **12. Diet**—"Below the Peasants, it should be remembered, was still another even more helpless class, the servile farm-laborers. The same witness informs us that of the extraordinary imposts the Peasants paid nearly twice as much in proportion to their estimated property as the Barons, Nobles, and Burghers together. Moreover, the upper classes were assessed at their own valuation, while they arbitrarily fixed that of the Peasants, who had no voice. (*Relazioni degli Ambasciatori, Veneti*, Serie I., tomo i., pp. 378, 379, 389.)" (Lowell's note.) **14. Father of the Church**—presumably St. Augustine. **15. Proudhon**—Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865), French socialist, to whom is attributed the phrase "Property is theft." **15. Bourdaloue**—Louis Bourdaloue (1632-1704), famous French preacher. **15. Montesquieu**—Charles de Secondat, Baron de la Brède et de Montesquieu (1689-1755), author of *L'esprit des lois* (1748). **16. national workshops**—After the French Revolution of 1848 national workshops were established by the French government on the theory that society must guarantee each citizen an opportunity to work. **20. Charles V.**—(1500-1558) King of Spain and Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, the greatest monarch of his time. **30-31. Lazarus . . . Dives**—Cf. Luke 16:19 ff. *Dives* is the Latin for rich man.

mind; but, whether for good or evil, it should not be overlooked that the acorn from which it sprang was ripened on the British oak. Every successive swarm that has gone out from this *officina gentium* has, when left to its own instincts—may I not call them hereditary instincts?—assumed a more or less thoroughly democratic form. This would seem to show, what I believe to be the fact, that the British Constitution, under whatever disguises of prudence or decorum, is essentially democratic. England, indeed, may be called a monarchy with democratic tendencies, the United States a democracy with conservative instincts. People are continually saying that America is in the air, and I am glad to think it is, since this means only that a clearer conception of human claims and human duties is beginning to be prevalent. The discontent with the existing order of things, however, pervaded the atmosphere wherever the conditions were favorable, long before Columbus, seeking the back door of Asia, found himself knocking at the front door of America. I say wherever the conditions were favorable, for it is certain that the germs of disease do not stick or find a prosperous field for their development and noxious activity unless where the simplest sanitary precautions have been neglected. “For this effect defective comes by cause,” as Polonius said long ago. It is only by instigation of the wrongs of men that what are called the Rights of Man become turbulent and dangerous. It is then only that they syllogize unwelcome truths. It is not the insurrections of ignorance that are dangerous, but the revolts of intelligence:—

“The wicked and the weak rebel in vain,  
Slaves by their own compulsion.”

Had the governing classes in France during the last century paid as much heed to their proper business as to their pleasures or manners, the guillotine need never have severed that spinal marrow of orderly and secular tradition through which in a normally constituted state the brain sympathizes with the extremities and sends will and impulsion thither. It is only when the reasonable and practicable are denied that men demand the unreasonable and impracticable; only when the possible is made difficult that they fancy the impossible to be easy. Fairy tales are made out of the dreams of the poor. No; the sentiment which lies at the root of democracy is nothing new. I am speaking always of a sentiment, a spirit, and not of a form of government; for this was but the outgrowth of the other and not its cause. This sentiment is merely an expression of the natural wish of people to have a hand, if need be a controlling hand, in the management of their own affairs. What is new is that they are more and more gaining that control, and learning more and more how to be worthy of it. What we used to call the tendency or drift—what we are being taught to call more wisely the evolution of things—has for some time been setting steadily in this direction. There is no good in arguing with

3. *officina gentium*—factory of peoples. 17-18. “For . . . cause”—The quotation is from *Hamlet*, Act II, scene 2, line 103. 22-23. “The wicked . . . compulsion”—misquoted from Coleridge’s “France: An Ode”:

“The Sensual and the Dark rebel in vain,  
Slaves by their own compulsion.”



the inevitable. The only argument available with an east wind is to put on your overcoat. And in this case, also, the prudent will prepare themselves to encounter what they cannot prevent. Some people advise us to put on the brakes, as if the movement of which we are conscious were that of a railway  
 5 train running down an incline. But a metaphor is no argument, though it be sometimes the gunpowder to drive one home and imbed it in the memory. Our disquiet comes of what nurses and other experienced persons call growing-pains, and need not seriously alarm us. They are what every generation before us—certainly every generation since the invention of printing—has gone  
 10 through with more or less good fortune. To the door of every generation there comes a knocking, and unless the household, like the Thane of Cawdor and his wife, have been doing some deed without a name, they need not shudder. It turns out at worst to be a poor relation who wishes to come in out of the cold. The porter always grumbles and is slow to open. “Who’s there, in the name of  
 15 Beelzebub?” he mutters. Not a change for the better in our human house-keeping has ever taken place that wise and good men have not opposed it,—have not prophesied with the alderman that the world would wake up to find its throat cut in consequence of it. The world, on the contrary, wakes up, rubs its eyes, yawns, stretches itself, and goes about its business as if nothing had  
 20 happened. Suppression of the slave trade, abolition of slavery, trade unions,—at all of these excellent people shook their heads despondingly, and murmured “Ichabod.” But the trade unions are now debating instead of conspiring, and we all read their discussions with comfort and hope, sure that they are learning the business of citizenship and the difficulties of practical legislation.  
 25 One of the most curious of these frenzies of exclusion was that against the emancipation of the Jews. All share in the government of the world was denied for centuries to perhaps the ablest, certainly the most tenacious, race that had ever lived in it—the race to whom we owed our religion and the purest spiritual stimulus and consolation to be found in all literature—a race in which ability  
 30 seems as natural and hereditary as the curve of their noses, and whose blood, furtively mingling with the bluest bloods in Europe, has quickened them with its own indomitable impulsion. We drove them into a corner, but they had their revenge, as the wronged are always sure to have it sooner or later. They made their corner the counter and banking-house of the world, and thence they  
 35 rule it and us with the ignobler sceptre of finance. Your grandfathers mobbed Priestley only that you might set up his statue and make Birmingham the headquarters of English Unitarianism. We hear it said sometimes that this is an age of transition, as if that made matters clearer; but can any one point us to an age that was not? If he could, he would show us an age of stagnation.  
 40 The question for us, as it has been for all before us, is to make the transition

11. knocking—*Cf. Macbeth*, Act II, scene 2. 11-12. Thane of Cawdor . . . wife—*Macbeth* and Lady *Macbeth*. *Cf. Act I, scene 3*. 12. deed . . . name—*Cf. Macbeth*, Act IV, scene 1, line 49. 14-15. porter . . . mutters—*Cf. Macbeth*, Act II, scene 3. 22. “Ichabod”—*Cf. I Sam.* 4:21. 22. conspiring—Until 1871 trade unions in Great Britain were legally conspiracies. 36. Priestley—Joseph Priestley (1733-1804), chemist, Unitarian, and social liberal. In 1791, during the excitement over the French Revolution his house was plundered by a mob in Birmingham.

gradual and easy, to see that our points are right so that the train may not come to grief. For we should remember that nothing is more natural for people whose education has been neglected than to spell evolution with an initial "r." A great man struggling with the storms of fate has been called a sublime spectacle; but surely a great man wrestling with these new forces that have come into the world, mastering them and controlling them to beneficent ends, would be a yet sublimer. Here is not a danger, and if there were it would be only a better school of manhood, a nobler scope for ambition. I have hinted that what people are afraid of in democracy is less the thing itself than what they conceive to be its necessary adjuncts and consequences. It is supposed to reduce all mankind to a dead level of mediocrity in character and culture, to vulgarize men's conceptions of life, and therefore their code of morals, manners, and conduct—to endanger the rights of property and possession. But I believe that the real gravamen of the charges lies in the habit it has of making itself generally disagreeable by asking the Powers that Be at the most inconvenient moment whether they are the powers that ought to be. If the powers that be are in a condition to give a satisfactory answer to this inevitable question, they need feel in no way discomfited by it.

Few people take the trouble of trying to find out what democracy really is. Yet this would be a great help, for it is our lawless and uncertain thoughts, it is the indefiniteness of our impressions, that fill darkness, whether mental or physical, with spectres and hobgoblins. Democracy is nothing more than an experiment in government, more likely to succeed in a new soil, but likely to be tried in all soils, which must stand or fall on its own merits as others have done before it. For there is no trick of perpetual motion in politics any more than in mechanics. President Lincoln defined democracy to be "the government of the people by the people for the people." This is a sufficiently compact statement of it as a political arrangement. Theodore Parker said that "Democracy meant not 'I'm as good as you are,' but 'You're as good as I am.'" And this is the ethical conception of it, necessary as a complement of the other; a conception which, could it be made actual and practical, would easily solve all the riddles that the old sphinx of political and social economy who sits by the roadside has been proposing to mankind from the beginning, and which mankind have shown such a singular talent for answering wrongly. In this sense Christ was the first true democrat that ever breathed, as the old dramatist Dekker said he was the first true gentleman. The characters may be easily doubled, so strong is the likeness between them. A beautiful and profound

1. **points**—switch points, called frogs by American railway men. 4. **great man . . . fate**—misquoted from Pope's prologue to Addison's "Cato": "A brave man struggling with the storms of fate . . ." (line 21). 14. **gravamen**—burden. 15. **Powers that Be**—Cf. Rom. 13:1. 26-27. **"the government . . . people"**—from the conclusion of the Gettysburg Address (1863). 28. **Theodore Parker**—(1810-1860) leading Unitarian minister and abolitionist. 32. **sphinx**—See note 15, p. 407. 36. **Dekker**—Thomas Dekker (1570?-1641?). At the end of Pt. 1 of *The Honest Whore* (1604) occurs the passage:

"The best of men  
That e'er wore earth about him was a sufferer,  
A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit,  
The first true gentleman that ever breath'd."

- parable of the Persian poet Jellaladeen tells us that "One knocked at the Beloved's door, and a voice asked from within 'Who is there?' and he answered 'It is I.' Then the voice said, 'This house will not hold me and thee;' and the door was not opened. Then went the lover into the desert and fasted and
- 5 prayed in solitude, and after a year he returned and knocked again at the door; and again the voice asked 'Who is there?' and he said 'It is thyself;' and the door was opened to him." But that is idealism, you will say, and this is an only too practical world. I grant it; but I am one of those who believe that the real will never find an irremovable basis till it rests on the ideal. It used
- 10 to be thought that a democracy was possible only in a small territory, and this is doubtless true of a democracy strictly defined, for in such all the citizens decide directly upon every question of public concern in a general assembly. An example still survives in the tiny Swiss canton of Appenzell. But this immediate intervention of the people in their own affairs is not of the essence
- 15 of democracy; it is not necessary, nor indeed, in most cases, practicable. Democracies to which Mr. Lincoln's definition would fairly enough apply have existed, and now exist, in which, though the supreme authority reside in the people, yet they can act only indirectly on the national policy. This generation has seen a democracy with an imperial figurehead, and in all that have
- 20 ever existed the body politic has never embraced all the inhabitants included within its territory, the right to share in the direction of affairs has been confined to citizens, and citizenship has been further restricted by various limitations, sometimes of property, sometimes of nativity, and always of age and sex.
- 25 The framers of the American Constitution were far from wishing or intending to found a democracy in the strict sense of the word, though, as was inevitable, every expansion of the scheme of government they elaborated has been in a democratical direction. But this has been generally the slow result of growth, and not the sudden innovation of theory; in fact, they have a profound
- 30 disbelief in theory, and knew better than to commit the folly of breaking with the past. They were not seduced by the French fallacy that a new system of government could be ordered like a new suit of clothes. They would as soon have thought of ordering a new suit of flesh and skin. It is only on the roaring loom of time that the stuff is woven for such a vesture of their thought and
- 35 experience as they were meditating. They recognized fully the value of tradition and habit as the great allies of permanence and stability. They all had that distaste for innovation which belonged to their race, and many of them a distrust of human nature derived from their creed. The day of sentiment was over, and no dithyrambic affirmations or fine-drawn analyses of the Rights of Man would

1. **Jellaladeen**—Jalal-uddin Rumi (1207-1272), Persian poet, the author of the *Mesnevi*, a series of moral apologues. The story cited by Lowell may be read in N. H. Dole and Belle M. Walker, *Flowers from the Persian Poets*, 1901, p. 206. 13. **Appenzell**—canton in Switzerland which altogether covers only 162 square miles, and which is divided into two parts. 19. **imperial figurehead**—Louis Napoleon, known as Napoleon III (1808-1873), "elected" Emperor of the French in 1852, who proclaimed the "liberal (that is, democratic) empire." 31. **French fallacy**—During the nineteenth century France was twice an empire, twice a kingdom, and twice a republic. 33-34. **roaring . . . time**—The phrase is from Carlyle's version of part of *Faust* in *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. 1, Chap. viii.

serve their present turn. This was a practical question, and they addressed themselves to it as men of knowledge and judgment should. Their problem was how to adapt English principles and precedents to the new conditions of American life, and they solved it with singular discretion. They put as many obstacles as they could contrive, not in the way of the people's will, but of their 5 whim. With few exceptions they probably admitted the logic of the then accepted syllogism,—democracy, anarchy, despotism. But this formula was framed upon the experience of small cities shut up to stew within their narrow walls, where the number of citizens made but an inconsiderable fraction of the inhabitants, where every passion was reverberated from house to house and from 10 man to man with gathering rumor till every impulse became gregarious and therefore inconsiderate, and every popular assembly needed but an infusion of eloquent sophistry to turn it into a mob, all the more dangerous because sanctified with the formality of law.

Fortunately their case was wholly different. They were to legislate for a 15 widely scattered population and for States already practised in the discipline of a partial independence. They had an unequalled opportunity and enormous advantages. The material they had to work upon was already democratical by instinct and habitude. It was tempered to their hands by more than a century's schooling in self-government. They had but to give permanent and conservative form to a ductile mass. In giving impulse and direction to their new 20 institutions, especially in supplying them with checks and balances, they had a great help and safeguard in their federal organization. The different, sometimes conflicting, interests and social systems of the several States made existence as a Union and coalescence into a nation conditional on a constant practice of moderation and compromise. The very elements of disintegration were 25 the best guides in political training. Their children learned the lesson of compromise only too well, and it was the application of it to a question of fundamental morals that cost us our civil war. We learned once for all that compromise makes a good umbrella but a poor roof; that it is a temporary expedient, 30 often wise in party politics, almost sure to be unwise in statesmanship.

Has not the trial of democracy in America proved, on the whole, successful? If it had not, would the Old World be vexed with any fears of its proving contagious? This trial would have been less severe could it have been made 35 with a people homogeneous in race, language, and traditions, whereas the United States have been called on to absorb and assimilate enormous masses of foreign population, heterogeneous in all these respects, and drawn mainly from that class which might fairly say that the world was not their friend, nor the world's law. The previous condition too often justified the traditional 40 Irishman, who, landing in New York and asked what his politics were, inquired if there was a Government there, and on being told that there was,

14. law—"The effect of the electric telegraph in reproducing this trooping of emotion and perhaps of opinion is yet to be measured. The effect of Darwinism as a disintegrator of humanitarianism is also to be reckoned with." (Lowell's note.) 21. ductile—easily led. 39. world was not . . . —*Romeo and Juliet*, Act v, scene 1, line 72.

retorted, "Thin I 'm agin it!" We have taken from Europe the poorest, the most ignorant, the most turbulent of her people, and have made them over into good citizens, who have added to our wealth, and who are ready to die in defence of a country and of institutions which they know to be worth dying  
 5 for. The exceptions have been (and they are lamentable exceptions) where these hordes of ignorance and poverty have coagulated in great cities. But the social system is yet to seek which has not to look the same terrible wolf in the eyes. On the other hand, at this very moment Irish peasants are buying up the worn-out farms of Massachusetts, and making them productive again by the same  
 10 virtues of industry and thrift that once made them profitable to the English ancestors of the men who are deserting them. To have achieved even these prosaic results (if you choose to call them so), and that out of materials the most discordant,—I might say the most recalcitrant,—argues a certain beneficent virtue in the system that could do it, and is not to be accounted for by  
 15 mere luck. Carlyle said scornfully that America meant only roast turkey every day for everybody. He forgot that States, as Bacon said of wars, go on their bellies. As for the security of property, it should be tolerably well secured in a country where every other man hopes to be rich, even though the only property qualification be the ownership of two hands that add to the general wealth.  
 20 Is it not the best security for anything to interest the largest possible number of persons in its preservation and the smallest in its division? In point of fact, far-seeing men count the increasing power of wealth and its combinations as one of the chief dangers with which the institutions of the United States are threatened in the not distant future. The right of individual property is no  
 25 doubt the very corner-stone of civilization as hitherto understood, but I am a little impatient of being told that property is entitled to exceptional consideration because it bears all burdens of the State. It bears those, indeed, which can most easily be borne, but poverty pays with its person the chief expenses of war, pestilence, and famine. Wealth should not forget this, for poverty is be-  
 30 ginning to think of it now and then. Let me not be misunderstood. I see as clearly as any man possibly can, and rate as highly, the value of wealth, and of hereditary wealth, as the security of refinement, the feeder of all those arts that ennoble and beautify life, and as making a country worth living in. Many an ancestral hall here in England has been a nursery of that culture which  
 35 has been of example and benefit to all. Old gold has a civilizing virtue which new gold must grow old to be capable of secreting.

I should not think of coming before you to defend or to criticise any form of government. All have their virtues, all their defects, and all have illustrated

15. Carlyle said—in *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, No. 1 (1850): "Cease to brag to me of America, and its model institutions and constitutions. . . . Hitherto she bought ploughs and hammers, in a very successful manner; hitherto, in spite of her 'roast-geese with apple-sauce,' she is not much. 'Roast-geese with apple-sauce for the poorest working-man'; well, surely that is something . . . but that, even if it could continue, is by no means enough. . . . My friend, brag not yet of our American cousins!" 16. States—probably a memory of Bacon's essay "Of the True Greatnesse of Kingdomes and Estates," though the saying "An army, like a serpent, goes on its belly" is ascribed to Frederick the Great.

one period or another in the history of the race, with signal services to humanity and culture. There is not one that could stand a cynical cross-examination by an experienced criminal lawyer, except that of a perfectly wise and perfectly good despot, such as the world has never seen, except in that white-haired king of Browning's, who

5

"Lived long ago  
In the morning of the world,  
When Earth was nearer Heaven than now."

The English race, if they did not invent government by discussion, have at least carried it nearest to perfection in practice. It seems a very safe and reasonable contrivance for occupying the attention of the country, and is certainly a better way of settling questions than by push of pike. Yet, if one should ask it why it should not rather be called government by gabble, it would have to fumble in its pocket a good while before it found the change for a convincing reply. As matters stand, too, it is beginning to be doubtful whether Parliament and Congress sit at Westminster and Washington or in the editors' rooms of the leading journals, so thoroughly is everything debated before the authorized and responsible debaters get on their legs. And what shall we say of government by a majority of voices? To a person who in the last century would have called himself an Impartial Observer, a numerical preponderance seems, on the whole, as clumsy a way of arriving at truth as could well be devised, but experience has apparently shown it to be a convenient arrangement for determining what may be expedient or advisable or practicable at any given moment. Truth, after all, wears a different face to everybody, and it would be too tedious to wait till all were agreed. She is said to lie at the bottom of a well, for the very reason, perhaps, that whoever looks down in search of her sees his own image at the bottom, and is persuaded not only that he has seen the goddess, but that she is far better-looking than he had imagined.

The arguments against universal suffrage are equally unanswerable. "What," we exclaim, "shall Tom, Dick, and Harry have as much weight in the scale as I?" Of course, nothing could be more absurd. And yet universal suffrage has not been the instrument of greater unwisdom than contrivances of a more select description. Assemblies could be mentioned composed entirely of Masters of Arts and Doctors in Divinity which have sometimes shown traces of human passion or prejudice in their votes. Have the Serene Highnesses and Enlightened Classes carried on the business of Mankind so well, then, that there is no use in trying a less costly method? The democratic theory is that those Constitutions are likely to prove steadiest which have the broadest base, that the right to vote makes a safety-valve of every voter, and that the best way of teaching a man how to vote is to give him the chance of practice. For the question is no longer the academic one, "Is it wise to give every man the ballot?" but

6-8. "Lived . . . now"—from Pippa's third song in *Pippa Passes* by Browning.

rather the practical one, "Is it prudent to deprive whole classes of it any longer?" It may be conjectured that it is cheaper in the long run to lift men up than to hold them down, and that the ballot in their hands is less dangerous to society than a sense of wrong in their heads. At any rate this is the dilemma to which the drift of opinion has been for some time sweeping us, and in politics a dilemma is a more unmanageable thing to hold by the horns than a wolf by the ears. It is said that the right of suffrage is not valued when it is indiscriminately bestowed, and there may be some truth in this, for I have observed that what men prize most is a privilege, even if it be that of chief mourner at a funeral. But is there not danger that it will be valued at more than its worth if denied, and that some illegitimate way will be sought to make up for the want of it? Men who have a voice in public affairs are at once affiliated with one or other of the great parties between which society is divided, merge their individual hopes and opinions in its safer, because more generalized, hopes and opinions, are disciplined by its tactics, and acquire, to a certain degree, the orderly qualities of an army. They no longer belong to a class, but to a body corporate. Of one thing, at least, we may be certain, that, under whatever method of helping things to go wrong man's wit can contrive, those who have the divine right to govern will be found to govern in the end, and that the highest privilege to which the majority of mankind can aspire is that of being governed by those wiser than they. Universal suffrage has in the United States sometimes been made the instrument of inconsiderate changes, under the notion of reform, and this from a misconception of the true meaning of popular government. One of these has been the substitution in many of the States of popular election for official selection in the choice of judges. The same system applied to military officers was the source of much evil during our civil war, and, I believe, had to be abandoned. But it has been also true that on all great questions of national policy a reserve of prudence and discretion has been brought out at the critical moment to turn the scale in favor of a wiser decision. An appeal to the reason of the people has never been known to fail in the long run. It is, perhaps, true that, by effacing the principle of passive obedience, democracy, ill understood, has slackened the spring of that ductility to discipline which is essential to "the unity and married calm of States." But I feel assured that experience and necessity will cure this evil, as they have shown their power to cure others. And under what frame of policy have evils ever been remedied till they became intolerable, and shook men out of their indolent indifference through their fears?

We are told that the inevitable result of democracy is to sap the foundations of personal independence, to weaken the principle of authority, to lessen the respect due to eminence, whether in station, virtue, or genius. If these things were so, society could not hold together. Perhaps the best forcing-house of robust individuality would be where public opinion is inclined to be most

33. **unity and married calm**—*Troilus and Cressida*, Act 1, scene 3, line 100, from the speech of Ulysses on rank.

overbearing, as he must be of heroic temper who should walk along Piccadilly at the height of the season in a soft hat. As for authority, it is one of the symptoms of the time that the religious reverence for it is declining everywhere, but this is due partly to the fact that state-craft is no longer looked upon as a mystery, but as a business, and partly to the decay of superstition, by which I mean the habit of respecting what we are told to respect rather than what is respectable in itself. There is more rough and tumble in the American democracy than is altogether agreeable to people of sensitive nerves and refined habits, and the people take their political duties lightly and laughingly, as is, perhaps, neither unnatural nor unbecoming in a young giant. Democracies can no more jump away from their own shadows than the rest of us can. They no doubt sometimes make mistakes and pay honor to men who do not deserve it. But they do this because they believe them worthy of it, and though it be true that the idol is the measure of the worshipper, yet the worship has in it the germ of a nobler religion. But is it democracies alone that fall into these errors? I, who have seen it proposed to erect a statue to Hudson, the railway king, and have heard Louis Napoleon hailed as the savior of society by men who certainly had no democratic associations or leanings, am not ready to think so. But democracies have likewise their finer instincts. I have also seen the wisest statesman and most pregnant speaker of our generation, a man of humble birth and ungainly manners, of little culture beyond what his own genius supplied, become more absolute in power than any monarch of modern times through the reverence of his countrymen for his honesty, his wisdom, his sincerity, his faith in God and man, and the nobly humane simplicity of his character. And I remember another whom popular respect enveloped as with a halo, the least vulgar of men, the most austere genial, and the most independent of opinion. Wherever he went he never met a stranger, but everywhere neighbors and friends proud of him as their ornament and decoration. Institutions which could bear and breed such men as Lincoln and Emerson had surely some energy for good. No, amid all the fruitless turmoil and miscarriage of the world, if there be one thing steadfast and of favorable omen, one thing to make optimism distrust its own obscure distrust, it is the rooted instinct in men to admire what is better and more beautiful than themselves. The touchstone of political and social institutions is their ability to supply them with worthy objects of this sentiment, which is the very tap-root of civilization and progress. There would seem to be no readier way of feeding it with the elements of growth and vigor than such an organization of society as will enable men to respect themselves, and so to justify them in respecting others.

Such a result is quite possible under other conditions than those of an

**1-2. Piccadilly . . . hat**—To walk in Piccadilly, which was the center of fashion in London, required wearing a high hat. Lowell's point is that a democracy that produces no more non-conformists than Piccadilly does is a failure. **16. Hudson**—George Hudson (1800-1871), English speculator and railroad-builder. The proposal to build a statue to him, while he was living, met general disapproval. **17. savior of society**—*Cf.* Browning's poem "Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau: Saviour of Society."



avowedly democratical Constitution. For I take it that the real essence of democracy was fairly enough defined by the First Napoleon when he said that the French Revolution meant "*la carrière ouverte aux talents*"—a clear pathway for merit of whatever kind. I should be inclined to paraphrase this by calling democracy that form of society, no matter what its political classification, in which every man had a chance and knew that he had it. If a man can climb, and feels himself encouraged to climb, from a coalpit to the highest position for which he is fitted, he can well afford to be indifferent what name is given to the government under which he lives. The Bailli of Mirabeau, uncle of the more famous tribune of that name, wrote in 1771: "The English are, in my opinion, a hundred times more agitated and more unfortunate than the very Algerines themselves, because they do not know and will not know till the destruction of their over-swollen power, which I believe very near, whether they are monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy, and wish to play the part of all three." England has not been obliging enough to fulfil the Bailli's prophecy, and perhaps it was this very carelessness about the name, and concern about the substance of popular government, this skill in getting the best out of things as they are, in utilizing all the motives which influence men, and in giving one direction to many impulses, that has been a principal factor of her greatness and power. Perhaps it is fortunate to have an unwritten Constitution, for men are prone to be tinkering the work of their own hands, whereas they are more willing to let time and circumstance mend or modify what time and circumstance have made. All free governments, whatever their name, are in reality governments by public opinion, and it is on the quality of this public opinion that their prosperity depends. It is, therefore, their first duty to purify the element from which they draw the breath of life. With the growth of democracy grows also the fear, if not the danger, that this atmosphere may be corrupted with poisonous exhalations from lower and more malarious levels, and the question of sanitation becomes more instant and pressing. Democracy in its best sense is merely the letting in of light and air. Lord Sherbrooke, with his usual epigrammatic terseness, bids you educate your future rulers. But would this alone be a sufficient safeguard? To educate the intelligence is to enlarge the horizon of its desires and wants. And it is well that this should be so. But the enterprise must go deeper and prepare the way for satisfying those desires and wants in so far as they are legitimate. What is really ominous of danger to the existing order of things is not democracy (which, properly understood, is a conservative force), but the Socialism which may find a fulcrum in it. If we cannot equalize conditions and fortunes any more than we can equalize the brains of men—and a very sagacious person has said that "where two men ride of a horse one must ride behind"—we can yet, perhaps, do something to correct those methods and influences that lead to enormous inequalities, and to

3. "*la . . . talents*"—opportunity open to the talented man—a phrase much used by Carlyle. 9-10. *Bailli . . . tribune*—Jean Antoine Riquetti, Bailli de Mirabeau, uncle of Honoré Gabriel Riquetti, Comte de Mirabeau (1749-1791), the greatest statesman of the French Revolution. 12. *Algerines*—who formed a despotic, piratical state in northern Africa in the eighteenth century. 30. *Sherbrooke*—Robert Lowe, Viscount Sherbrooke (1811-1892), Liberal English politician.

prevent their growing more enormous. It is all very well to pooh-pooh Mr. George and to prove him mistaken in his political economy. I do not believe that land should be divided because the quantity of it is limited by nature. Of what may this not be said? *A fortiori*, we might on the same principle insist on a division of human wit, for I have observed that the quantity of this has been even more inconveniently limited. Mr. George himself has an inequitably large share of it. But he is right in his impelling motive; right, also, I am convinced, in insisting that humanity makes a part, by far the most important part, of political economy; and in thinking man to be of more concern and more convincing than the longest columns of figures in the world. For unless you include human nature in your addition, your total is sure to be wrong and your deductions from it fallacious. Communism means barbarism, but Socialism means, or wishes to mean, coöperation and community of interests, sympathy, the giving to the hands not so large a share as to the brains, but a larger share than hitherto in the wealth they must combine to produce—means, in short, the practical application of Christianity to life, and has in it the secret of an orderly and benign reconstruction. State Socialism would cut off the very roots in personal character—self-help, forethought, and frugality—which nourish and sustain the trunk and branches of every vigorous Commonwealth.

I do not believe in violent changes, nor do I expect them. Things in possession have a very firm grip. One of the strongest cements of society is the conviction of mankind that the state of things into which they are born is a part of the order of the universe, as natural, let us say, as that the sun should go round the earth. It is a conviction that they will not surrender except on compulsion, and a wise society should look to it that this compulsion be not put upon them. For the individual man there is no radical cure, outside of human nature itself, for the evils to which human nature is heir. The rule will always hold good that you must

"Be your own palace or the world's your gaol."

But for artificial evils, for evils that spring from want of thought, thought must find a remedy somewhere. There has been no period of time in which wealth has been more sensible of its duties than now. It builds hospitals, it establishes missions among the poor, it endows schools. It is one of the advantages of accumulated wealth, and of the leisure it renders possible, that people have time to think of the wants and sorrows of their fellows. But all these remedies are partial and palliative merely. It is as if we should apply plasters to a single pustule of the small-pox with a view of driving out the disease. The true way is to discover and to extirpate the germs. As society is now constituted these are in the air it breathes, in the water it drinks, in things that seem, and which it has always believed, to be the most innocent and healthful. The evil elements it neglects corrupt these in their springs and pollute them in their courses. Let us be of good cheer, however, remembering that the misfortunes hardest to

2. George—Henry George (1839-1897), single-taxer, and author of *Progress and Poverty* (1879). 4. *A fortiori*—with greater force. 29. "Be your . . . gaol"—somewhat misquoted from John Donne: "Be thine own palace, or the world's thy jail."

bear are those which never come. The world has outlived much, and will outlive a great deal more, and men have contrived to be happy in it. It has shown the strength of its constitution in nothing more than in surviving the quack medicines it has tried. In the scales of the destinies brawn will never weigh so  
5 much as brain. Our healing is not in the storm or in the whirlwind, it is not in monarchies, or aristocracies, or democracies, but will be revealed by the still small voice that speaks to the conscience and the heart, prompting us to a wider and wiser humanity.

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